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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

From the Editor's Desk...

Well now... as the saying goes.... "all good things must come to an end" ... Beginning with this issue, we go back on our regular, weekly schedule. Maybe next year we'll go to three summer monthly issues instead of two like this year. In any case, as most of you are aware, lately we've been enjoying rapid air changes here in Florida.

Better known as Hurricanes and Tropical Storms. So far, thankfully, it hasn't amounted to much in North Florida. It does however, hamper the outdoor activities. In our new Bits & Bytes column, this is discussed further.

It'll be interesting to watch Senator Orrin Hatch's actions over the next few months. In all probabilities, he'll ranting over Clinton and Gates... trying to keep the pot stirred as best he can. We shall see. Hatch... a virtual unknown before the "Republican Revolution" has, in recent months proven himself to be "just another politician". While he appears to be "squeaky clean" by his dress and mannerisms one has to wonder. This guy has been in the Senate for how many years? Where was his BIG MOUTH during the Iran/Contra Hearings?

The Panamanian Debacle and of course the Bank Failure Investigations??? Obvious by his lack of presence and silence?? This is one politico who needs to be booted by the TERM Limits law that's proposed. Hatch plays

favorites like John Q. Public plays his TV. I simply cannot wait to hear Hatch's new tirades about Bill Gates and Bill Clinton. I need a good laugh. And the politicians wonder why there is LOW Voter Turnout? Hatch and his cronies are good examples of some of the causes.

It is sad to see low turn out but its a sign of the times. Maybe the sleaze ball politicians we have in Washington want it that way so its easier to get "their" people out voting and thus fairly push the vote whichever way they wish. Maybe just maybe.... the masses ought to get out and vote. It would be nice to see the thieves, liars and backroom wheeler/dealers we now call politicians blown right out of office and Washington D.C. in one fell swoop. This year and the year 2000 are deciding factors. Please get out and vote; locally, Statewide and Federally.

Ralph

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LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS
Weekly Happenings in the Computer World
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Asks Court To Limit Gates Deposition

Microsoft lawyers asked a federal judge on Tuesday to limit the U.S. government to no more than eight hours of deposition with its chairman and chief executive, Bill Gates.

In response to the Justice Department's request last week that Gates be made available for two consecutive days of testimony, Microsoft accused the government of "gamesmanship" aimed at disrupting the company's efforts to prepare for a landmark antitrust trial, set to begin Sept. 8.

In its 25-page filing, the world's leading software company said the government "inexplicably" waited two months after filing its lawsuit to seek depositions from 17 Microsoft executives including Gates.

The federal government and 20 states filed a broad antitrust suit against Microsoft on May 18, accusing the company of illegally using a monopoly in personal computer operating systems to gain control of the Internet software market.

"Plaintiffs' decision to wait 60 days to serve their first deposition notice is inexplicable and ... appears timed to interfere with Microsoft's trial preparation," the Redmond, Wash.-based company said in its filing. "The court should not countenance such gamesmanship."

Microsoft said it offered to make available Gates, Microsoft President Steve Ballmer and seven other executives of the government's choosing.

U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson has set a hearing for Thursday to hear arguments on the pretrial maneuvering, which threatens to delay the start of the trial.

Microsoft also argued in the filing that the government consultants should not be allowed access to closely guarded source code to its Windows 98 operating system unless they sign agreements that would limit their ability to work for Microsoft rivals for up to 18 months.

The source code, which includes notes on how Windows 98 works, is among Microsoft's "most valuable and closely guarded assets," the company said.

"That source code, for a currently shipping product responsible for generating billions of dollars of revenue for Microsoft, should not be treated cavalierly," it said.

Gates Questioned in Antitrust Case

Government lawyers on Friday spent a second day questioning Microsoft chairman Bill Gates in preparation for a trial next month of their antitrust suit against the software giant.

One attorney, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Gates was "more responsive" during 8 1/2 hours of questioning Friday after being "evasive and non-responsive" during a similar session Thursday. A third round of questioning will be held next Wednesday, the attorney said.

Gates, the world's richest man with more than an estimated \$50 billion in assets, was questioned in a conference room at Microsoft's headquarters near Seattle.

A Microsoft spokesman, Mark Murray, said of earlier complaints that Gates wasn't being responsive: "The facts don't support the government's case, so it's not surprising that the government doesn't want to hear the facts."

U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, who will preside over the trial, previously told government lawyers they can interview Gates "as long as it takes." The government planned to interview 15 Microsoft executives, including Gates, as it prepares for the Sept. 23 trial.

The Justice Department and 20 states allege that Microsoft used its market influence as the dominant producer of operating software for personal computers to stifle competition in the high-tech industry.

Attorney Sam Miller of San Francisco, who deposed Gates in 1994 for the Justice Department during its last investigation of Microsoft, cautioned that pre-trial depositions often can seem ponderous.

"Unlike in a trial, the lawyer can ask questions over and over again, until they get an answer they're happy with or until the defending lawyer tells the witness not to answer any further," said Miller, now with the law firm Folger, Levin and Kahn. "It's a difficult situation for any witness, not a natural conversation."

Steve Houck of the New York attorney general's office, representing the 20 states suing Microsoft, questioned Gates for roughly six hours Thursday, then the Justice Department's David Boies took his turn. Boies also will handle the interview with Gates next Wednesday.

In addition to Gates in the conference room, there were three lawyers each for the 20 states, the Justice Department and Microsoft, for a total of 10 people.

"Bill Gates will be very well prepared," said Miller, who isn't connected with the current case. "He's the son of a lawyer; he's been deposed several times, so he's well aware of the legal process. He is, by personality and background, very smart and generally can be combative."

Miller said the government also likely is considering whether Gates will make an effective witness during the upcoming trial. Gates has testified publicly in at least two previous lawsuits, once in 1986 and again in 1994.

''It gives you a very good opportunity to make a judgment about a witness, to size up a witness about how he will perform before a judge or jury,'' Miller said. ''That would be one of the objectives of the government's lawyer.''

The Seattle Times reported that Gates told the government during Thursday's deposition that he knew nothing about a reported attempt to persuade rival Netscape Communications Corp. to divide the market for Internet browsers.

The Justice Department and 20 state attorneys general contend that Microsoft met with Netscape in May 1995 and offered to divide the market for Internet browsers. Citing a deposition with Netscape co-founder Marc Andreessen, the government alleged that Microsoft offered not to make browsers except for Windows 95 if Netscape agreed not to make browsers for Windows or to help design rival operating systems.

Gates previously called the allegation about collusion ''an outrageous lie.'' He said the 1995 meeting ''was to discuss various technologies Microsoft proposed sharing with Netscape, so that Netscape's browser could take advantage of the cool new features we were developing for Windows 95.''

Microsoft Subpoenas Netscape Messages

Microsoft Corp. has demanded ''flame mail'' messages from Netscape Communications Corp. in a bid to scorch its competitor in next month's antitrust trial.

Hinting at one strategy it may use at the Sept. 23 trial, the Redmond, Wash., software company has subpoenaed internal electronic forums run by Netscape employees, the Journal reported.

One forum, known as ''bad attitude,'' is used to vent about everything from competitors to cafeteria food, and a second, ''really bad attitude,'' is where a small circle of young engineers posted barbed messages, known as flame mail, about their workplace and products.

Microsoft may plan to use some of the more embarrassing of these electronic messages to show that it was management errors or weak products that led to a decline in Netscape's share of the Internet-browser market -- not the predatory practices of a monopolist, as the government charges, the Journal said.

The subpoena surprised the engineering ranks at Netscape, where frank and often deeply cutting criticism was common on electronic ''bulletin boards'' that were never intended to be seen by outsiders, especially the arch-enemy Microsoft. Bad attitude was intended as ''an anything-goes forum for venting in as inappropriate and vitriolic a way as you felt like'' without fear of management reprisal, one engineer wrote, the Journal reported.

The second, private bulletin board was open by invitation only. ''You could be on RBA only if you first flamed so hard that bile flowed from your eye sockets,'' the forum's creator, Jamie Zawinski, wrote on his personal Web site. He says that he has discontinued the forum.

The Journal said Zawinski could not be reached for comment.

Microsoft's internal e-mail: More ammo for the DOJ

Microsoft's internal e-mails are starting to look like the high-tech industry's version of the Nixon tapes. The words of Microsoft's own executives and other employees ultimately could do more damage to the software giant than any other evidence that the Justice Department is gathering as it prepares for its Sept. 23 showdown in court.

At first glance, the evidence appears damning in terms of how Microsoft tried to bully friends and foes alike to cave in to its demands. This will likely be a key piece of the government's strategy to convince U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson that Microsoft abused its monopoly power. If Justice wins that major battle, it will have a much easier time asking for harsh remedies to rein in Microsoft's dominance.

But what do we learn from reading these memos? Here are a few takeaways that should come as no surprise to anyone who's done business with Microsoft or bought its products:

MICROSOFT IS A BULLY. Microsoft and its employees have become more arrogant as the company has become more successful, and it takes advantage of every opportunity to leverage that success to win sales and force concessions regarding technology.

BIG BUSINESS IS TOUGH. I'd be willing to bet Bill Gates and Andy Grove had many more knock-down, drag-out fights than the one chronicled in memos leaked to the press last week regarding Intel's planned support of native signal processing technology. That's what business is all about, isn't it? Put two powerful CEOs in a room to talk about future plans, and it's guaranteed that each one will try to browbeat the other into submission.

MICROSOFT CHEATS. Inserting code in a product to intentionally break another company's product, as Microsoft allegedly did with Windows 3.1 and DR-DOS, is just plain dumb. Documenting the strategy in e-mail is even dumber. Saving the e-mail completes the dumbness troika.

The first two items beg the question, So what? Bullheadedness, arrogance and hardball tactics, like it or not, are accepted practices in the business world. In these areas, Microsoft execs are not much different from their peers--despite what competitors want you to think. And internal e-mails alone don't give a fair picture of a company's strategy.

The third item is more disturbing, since it potentially shows that Microsoft plotted to intentionally subvert a competitor by technical, not marketing, means. Originally gathered under subpoena in Caldera's antitrust suit against Microsoft, the evidence could become a key part of the federal antitrust case.

As these and other internal memos continue to swirl around Microsoft with the force of Hurricane Bonnie, the company seems more vulnerable now than at any other time in the past decade. While it laughed off the consent decree handed down in 1995 after the first government investigation into its business practices, things are different now. The government seems much more prepared this time, and every step Microsoft has taken lately to

sway opinion its way has been a misstep. Granted, it won a key battle in June when a U.S. Appeals Court overturned a preliminary injunction against bundling Internet Explorer with Windows 95. But it has yet to win the war.

Who knows what additional damage lurks inside the internal memos the Justice Department has gathered during its investigation? Right now, Bill Gates is probably wishing he had the e-mail equivalent of Richard Nixon's 18-minute gap.

U.S. Asks Judge Not To Throw Out Microsoft Case

The U.S. government urged a federal judge not to dismiss its antitrust case against Microsoft Corp., and accused Bill Gates and other executives of an 'astonishing lack of recall' when questioned under oath.

In an 89-page filing made late on Monday in U.S. District Court here, the Justice Department and 20 states said they had substantial evidence that Microsoft had abused its dominant position to thwart rival Netscape Communications Corp. (NSCP - news) and take control of the market for Internet browsers.

The filing was in reply to Microsoft's Aug. 10 request to have the government's landmark antitrust suit against the software giant dismissed.

'Because Microsoft believed that it could not win what it repeatedly described as 'the browser war' legitimately and on the merits, it resorted to the predatory and anti-competitive agreements and conduct described,'' the government said.

The company's executives, when interviewed under oath by government lawyers, 'claim an astonishing lack of recall,'' the brief said.

'Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, who is placed at the center of key events by numerous documents, displayed a particular failure of recollection at his deposition,'' the government said. ''Mr. Gates' testimony appears to be part of a pattern of Microsoft attempting to rewrite history."

Microsoft has repeatedly denied the government's charges and earlier this month asked that the case be dismissed for failing to meet basic legal standards.

Filmmaker Sues Internet Provider Over "Spam" Label

New York filmmaker Peter Hall says he dislikes spammers as much as anyone.

"They're idiots," he says.

But he dislikes being accused of being a spammer even more. So last Thursday, the former journalist and his independent filmmaking company, Big Bad Productions Inc., filed a lawsuit against Earthlink, the California-based Internet service provider, for falsely identifying him as a spammer.

Among the seven counts is the charge of libel, stemming from a list of

terminated Earthlink accounts that was posted to Internet newsgroups.

"We are taking the position that 'spammer' is a pejorative term," says Hall's lawyer, Andrew Grosso, who is seeking damages in excess of \$1 million. "Spammers are disliked. There is even legislation before Congress that would prohibit spamming."

The suit stems from a case of mistaken identity. It's nearly a year to the day from the morning Hall awoke to find himself starring in a real-life Kafka-esque drama.

Hall was preparing for the theatrical release of his first full-length feature film, "Delinquent," when he was suddenly cut off from all electronic communications by his then-ISP, Earthlink. The reason? Earthlink had received information from UUNet, its backbone Internet traffic carrier, that Hall's account had been used for spamming AOL members.

Unfortunately, the information was wrong. Apparently, the confusion arose because of a numerical identification system used to track users' online activity.

The ID numbers are reassigned each day, but when the initial spam complaint -- which originated from an AOL user in Japan--was received by UUNet, a clerk neglected to factor in the international dateline difference to determine the proper user identification number. The confusion resulted in Hall being mistakenly ID'd as the culprit.

UUNet then passed on the wrong information to Earthlink and the ISP took immediate action: Earthlink "toasted" Hall's account.

Hall tried frantically to contact Earthlink personnel to get to the bottom of the problem, but claims he was rebuffed by the company's abuse department, which refused to listen to Hall's protestations of innocence.

After UUNet admitted its mistake, Hall claims that Earthlink promised to immediately reactivate his prepaid account but inexplicably did not.

Furthermore, Hall says that six days after his account was terminated and more than 24 hours after being promised that his account would be reopened he received a phone call from Earthlink's VP of Communications with an offer for six months of free service-less than what he'd spent on long-distance phone calls trying to remedy the situation.

"I went ballistic," he admits.

"I'd been up all night waiting for them to turn on my account. I'd just spent five years working on this film and I was desperate to get my email. If you want to systematically drive someone mad, this is how you'd do it."

The next day, Hall signed up with an alternate ISP and soon found some emails had been forwarded from his Earthlink account. But from that day until the day that the lawsuit was filed, Hall says, Earthlink has been accepting Hall's e-mails, refusing to either forward them to him or bounce the messages back to the senders to alert them that the emails were not being received by Hall.

According to Hall, there are at least 591 messages to him at his old Earthlink account which he cannot access. Grosso alleges that, under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, "ISPs have a duty to either deliver

the mail or inform the sender that it cannot be delivered."

Hall is claiming that he suffered financially from the inability to promote the film's commercial debut and is seeking damages, as well as compensation for his mental anguish and humiliation. Earthlink had no comment on the lawsuit. Despite UUNet's role in the fiasco, Hall has not pursued legal action against the backbone.

"UUNet asserts that its reports are not intended to be construed as concrete evidence of wrongdoing," explains Hall. "They were responsive and treated me courteously. They never treated me like a criminal. And they apologized."

Microsoft Blamed in Software Glitch

Mark Alberding, a college student in San Francisco, was perplexed: His computer running Windows 95 was working fine until he installed some popular multimedia software called QuickTime.

Suddenly, whenever he double-clicked to look at any of the hundreds of digital photographs on his hard-drive, his machine launched the new QuickTime software from Apple Computer instead of a rival Microsoft program he had been using to view pictures.

This sometimes happens with personal computers. Ill-mannered new programs clash with old ones. The software "victims" can be programs from any vendor, even Microsoft. But what had been a common and fairly esoteric technical annoyance is a new focus in the landmark debate over whether Microsoft unfairly uses its enormous influence to stifle competition in the high-tech industry.

In Alberding's case, Microsoft's program stopped working. But the company's toughest critics say that Microsoft's own software too often is the victor not the victim in battles with rival programs. They want the Justice Department - already suing Microsoft in a broad antitrust lawsuit - also to investigate whether the software maker is deliberately trying to stamp out rivals using a sort of software sabotage.

Alberding suspects that in his case, Apple's QuickTime established itself as the default software to view his pictures, supplanting the viewer programs from Microsoft and other companies.

"It basically set itself up as the default," Alberding said.

"Sometimes when you install the most innocent-looking applications, all kinds of silly stuff happens," said Mark Stotzer, a support engineer for about 200 computer users at a California textbook publishing company. "I don't know how normal users can get anything to work after installing this stuff."

In Washington, executive Rob Glaser of Seattle-based RealNetworks Inc. fueled the debate when he accused rival Microsoft of deliberately designing some of its newest software to "break" his own popular product, which lets people hear audio and watch video over the Internet.

In a dramatic demonstration during a Senate hearing last month, Glaser showed his own Real Player G2 software working perfectly on a computer.

But it failed with an error message after he installed Microsoft's new Media Player.

In that case, Microsoft's player not only tried to take over the duties of playing audio and video files, it went belly-up because, unlike the G2 player, it's designed to recognize only the earliest types of RealNetworks audio and video data.

It was as if your stereo's CD player suddenly decided it would try to play all your eight-track tapes.

The largely sympathetic Senate panel appeared indignant.

"I would think that a responsible corporation would know better than to deliberately disable a competitor's product," said Judiciary Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, calling it "something the Justice Department has to take seriously."

Microsoft's engineers blamed a mistake in Glaser's own software. They detailed what they called a faulty entry that RealNetworks makes in the Windows Registry, a repository of system settings, and they've since noted that RealNetworks quietly fixed the problem in software it released last week.

Mike Elgan, the editor for Windows Magazine, complains the whole incident showed that Washington doesn't understand technology issues: "Hatch wouldn't know a registry key if it bit him in the gavel," Elgan said.

Glaser stands his ground, although his company's stock has lost one-fifth its value since his testimony. And one company that complained with Glaser about Microsoft's new Media Player, Xing Technologies, has retracted its statements.

Meanwhile, Glaser and some of Microsoft's biggest rivals - including Netscape Communications and Sun Microsystems - want new industry-wide principles to let computer users decide which programs as they're installed will take control of common data files.

Alberding, the college student, never got his problem completely solved despite his tinkering and a request for help on the Internet. He's all for the new industry plan. "That certainly makes sense, doesn't it?" he says.

"Internet Virgin" Site Sparks Lawsuit and Bickering

Ken Tipton, the mastermind behind the Our First Time Web site, where two teenagers were supposed to lose their virginity online, says the fiasco has become a professional and personal nightmare.

The event, which was conceived as a theatrical hoax a la Orson Welles' fake radio broadcast War of the Worlds, is now the subject of a bitter legal battle.

Tipton filed a lawsuit for defamation and breach of contract this week against the Internet Entertainment Group, his former Internet service provider in the virgin venture. IEG is the company behind one of the most profitable porn sites in the world and owns the rights to the infamous

Pamela Anderson-Tommy Lee video. Tipton wants \$3 million to \$5 million in contract damages and another \$10 million for defamation.

“My client has lost millions of dollars in potential ad revenues,” claimed Los Angeles attorney Stan Lieber, who has advised Tipton against speaking directly to the press. “Not to mention the permanent damage to his reputation as a filmmaker and an actor.”

Lieber said that Seth Warshavsky, IEG’s president, pulled the plug on the site in mid-July when he learned that the teenagers were not really going to consummate their rosy, weeks-long online romance with sex, but were instead going to opt for abstinence -- the message being that safe sex, and especially abstinence -- are best.

Warshavsky says that was just part of the problem.

“At first, we thought Tipton, who was calling himself ‘Oscar Welles’ at that point, was being straight with us, that these ‘teenagers’ were really who they said they were, and that they were really going to lose their virginity online. After we had signed a contract with Tipton, we started to get suspicious about the whole arrangement.

When Tipton was pressed to have the teenagers -- actually actors in their 20s -- sign model releases, Warshavsky said he refused. Then, he said, Tipton admitted to the whole event being a sham set up to promote publicity for a movie he was trying to make.

“He was a little tipsy when he confessed, and he tried to persuade us that we were all going to make lots of money by charging \$5 a pop to viewers on the day that the two were supposed to lose their virginity online,” Warshavsky said.

IEG pulled out of the project a few days later, and posted an angry disclaimer at their club.love site, said Tipton and his company were simply out to rip off the public. The ourfirsttime domain name was sold to another company, according to a press release from Lieber, which did not name the buyer. The new site uses the space to hawk skin flicks and sexual paraphernalia.

“These people have made a mockery of the Internet media,” proclaimed Warshavsky.

Of course, Lieber and his client tell a different story.

“Tipton was never going to charge for the site,” Lieber said. “It was going to be a public service announcement about safe sex. It was only after the threat of legal action from religious right groups that he came up with the safety net plan of charging people a dollar on their credit cards, to prove that they weren’t minors.”

Tipton is no stranger to pressure from the religious right. He says they were responsible for shutting down his chain of lucrative video stores in St. Louis, because he was distributing X-rated movies.

The movie idea that Tipton hoped to promote with the “Internet Virgins” idea is actually an autobiographical story about his personal and professional struggles after tangling with the religious right. Tipton calls it “In the Eye of the Beholder.”

Any damage done to the credibility of the medium by the hoax should be

minimal, says the Electronic Freedom Foundation's Stanton McCandlish.

"People believe in moderated media, be it print or online or broadcast," he said. "This stunt was unmoderated, so regular users of the Internet were probably skeptical from the beginning."

"The only people who seemed to buy it was not the public, but newspaper editors, who are always scrounging around for dirt about the Internet."

Warshavsky, who was only made aware of the lawsuit against him when a Wired News reporter told him about it on Thursday, said that he and IEG will fight, and may even take counter action against Tipton.

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PANEL RECOMMENDS INCREASED SPENDING ON HIGH-TECH R&D

The President's Information Technology Advisory Committee, a 26-member panel of prominent computer scientists and industry executives, has recommended that the U.S. government boost spending on information technology research by \$1 billion over five years, for a total of \$2.5 billion. The committee also suggested reviving the large, long-term projects that proved so productive in the 1970s and '80s. "The future great ideas that are not going to pan out for 15 years aren't getting enough support now," says the panel's co-chair. In its report, the panel warned against the tendency among federal agencies to focus on small, short-term projects to the detriment of larger, more basic science studies. In particular, the panel recommended additional funding for research into robust software, faster supercomputers and "scalable" communications networks capable of handling a billion users -- the number of estimated Internet users in 2005. The next step for the panel is to conduct a series of meetings with community and federal leaders to develop specific funding proposals with a goal of being included in the FY 2000 budget. (Science 21 Aug 98)

IBM TIGHTENS COMPUTER SECURITY

Working with colleagues at a Swiss university, IBM researchers have developed a new security scheme that effectively closes off back-door attempts to overwhelm computer security systems using so-called "active" attacks. Such attacks, which analyze the electronic responses to messages from Web sites to derive information that can then be used to decode an intercepted session, are considered to be the most dangerous hacking attempts that most encryption systems face. The Cramer-Shoup method, named for researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology and IBM Research respectively, thwarts active attacks by preventing such eavesdropping. "The game is over as far as cryptography systems being subject to these nasty kinds of attacks," says IBM's manager of network security and cryptography, who notes IBM plans to disseminate its findings to other researchers. "This is not the sort of stuff you hold tight and patent. This is the sort of stuff you publish and hope everyone adopts it quickly." (Reuters 24 Aug 98)

P&G SEEKS TO SET STANDARDS FOR WEB ADVERTISING

Procter & Gamble held a summit last week, inviting rival firms such as Unilever, Chlorox, and Nestle to join P&G in a unified effort to draft standards for measuring online audiences and establish a set of ad types that Web sites will accept. The company has set November as the deadline for accomplishing these tasks, and by April hopes to develop a way to reconcile contradictory data supplied by various online services. "Let's face it," says the P&G VP in charge of worldwide advertising. "There's a massive revolution in consumer habits. No one organization, or even a handful of organizations, can be the driver. No one is in control, and that's really disrupting the marketing landscape -- in a really positive way." The company says that in five years as much as 80% of its \$3-billion advertising budget could be spent on "interactive digital media," including the Internet, cable, interactive television and high-definition TV. (Wall Street Journal 24 Aug 98)

ONLINE BANKING GROWTH IS SLOWER THAN EXPECTED

Although the number of financial institutions offering online banking has grown rapidly (54% in 1998 compared to 38% in 1997), consumers are taking their time changing their habits, and only about 6% of customers nationwide use electronic banking. Use of the World Wide Web is what may make the difference, because it offers a universal interface to almost any computer system. An executive of Integrion, a consortium of 17 banks, IBM, and Visa USA, says: "In the last six months, the Web has become more important, and banks that might not have focused on a transactional Web site are now doing that." (New York Times 24 Aug 98)

STAMPMMASTER GRANTED PERMISSION TO BEGIN TESTING

StampMaster Inc., says it has received permission from the U.S. Postal Service to begin testing its PC postage-metering technology, using a base of 21 individuals and small businesses in the Washington, D.C. area. Last March, E-Stamp was granted similar approval, becoming the first company to receive such approval since postage meters were first introduced in 1920. Unlike E-Stamp, which requires users to purchase a small hardware device that attaches to their PC printer port, StampMaster requires no additional hardware. Users set up accounts with the company and then download postage from the StampMaster Web site. Software on users' PCs then prints out the stamps as each transaction is verified. Both StampMaster and E-Stamp are talking to Pitney Bowes, which claims it holds the patents on PC postage-metering, but neither company thinks its technology infringes on the Pitney Bowes patents. (Wall Street Journal 25 Aug 98)

DEVELOPERS FLOCKING TO MACINTOSH FOLD

Software developers are turning their eyes back to the Apple Macintosh platform, and liking what they see. Apple has committed \$100 million to marketing its new iMac machine, and the company is providing more free developer tools and working with key partners to bring more titles to market. Apple's strategy to stabilize its operating system has also contributed to the renewed confidence that many software developers have in the platform. "We're definitely seeing more Mac titles," says one computer store manager. Sales of Mac-only titles rose 12% to \$21.4 million in the first half of this year, according to PC Data. (Computer Retail Week 22 Aug 98)

CYBERGOLD CLAIMS PATENT ON "ATTENTION BROKERAGE"

CyberGold says it now holds a patent that covers "attention brokerage," the business of buying and selling the attention of Internet users. "We tried to make the patent application as broad as we possibly can," says CyberGold's CEO. "This new way of brokering the attention of people offering their attention to other people who want their attention -- is pretty much covered." The company says it will license its method to rivals in the online incentives market, possibly for a per-transaction fee. (Wall Street Journal 25 Aug 98)

STOLL PREPARES NEW CRITIQUE OF COMPUTERS IN SCHOOLS

Iconoclastic computer security expert, astronomer, and fierce Internet critic Clifford Stoll, who authored the best-selling book "Silicon Snake Oil," is working on a new book critical of the use of computers in primary and secondary education. Stoll told the Dallas Morning News: "I became a computer expert in my freshman year in high school, writing Fortran, Assembler, machine language and developing programs. Along the way, I've discovered that using computers . . . was a great way to make it look like

I was doing wonderful academics when, in fact, I'm just screwing around. And for all the many, many hours that I've spent online and on computers, seems to me that most of the important work that I've done has happened independent of the hours that I've spent online. When I think of the skills that I need as an astronomer, they're skills like knowing mathematics, understanding physics, being able to manipulate a telescope, being able to write a paper, being able to read analytically and understand what someone else has written. Being able to poke holes in arguments. To be able to stand up in front of a meeting and present my ideas. These days, the computers are loaded with programs to guide the kids through things. Do they spend more time playing and learning . . . rather than just doing the rote work as you were doing? The main thing the computer is teaching . . . is that if you want to learn, you sit behind a screen for hours on end, that you'll accept what a machine says without arguing, that relationships that develop over e-mail, Web pages and chat rooms are transitory and shallow. That if you're ever frustrated, all you have to do is pull the plug and reboot the machine." (Dallas Morning News 24 Aug 98)

JUSTICE DEPT. ASKING WHETHER GATES PRESSURED GROVES

As part of its antitrust suit against Microsoft, the U.S. Justice Department is trying to determine whether Microsoft chief executive Bill Gates made "vague threats" in 1995 to Intel chief Andy Grove about development of "native signal processing" (NSP) technology and about Intel's evolving Internet strategy. Intel wanted to develop a microprocessor that supported Java, which would have threatened the dominance of Microsoft's Windows operating systems, because programs written in Java could be run on any operating system. Attorney Charles F. Rule, an advisor to Microsoft, says: "Business partners like Intel and Microsoft occasionally have minor disputes, and the fact that the Justice Department and the states are apparently trying to shoehorn this into their case at the last minute shows how desperate they are." (New York Times 26 Aug 98)

DARPA LEADS FIGHT AGAINST DOMAIN-NAME HACKERS

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has awarded a \$1.4 million contract to Network Associates to develop a cryptographic authentication system for the Internet's domain-address system. The new system will enable the Net's routing points to verify the origin of any given Web page, preventing hackers from corrupting Web page caches or rerouting domain traffic altogether. It will not, however, prevent hackers from breaking into individual Web servers and changing pages. "That's not part of this particular approach," says the director of Network Associates' TIS Labs. The company is working with the Internet Software Consortium, which will distribute the security system to Unix vendors when it becomes commercially available. Beta versions are expected to be ready in about six months, with a final product on the market in about 18 months. (TechWeb 26 Aug 98)

ADOBE REJECTS QUARK'S OVERTURE

Quark Inc., maker of publishing and graphics software, says its offer to purchase rival Adobe Systems Inc. has been rejected. "Adobe has advised Quark that it is not interested in pursuing discussions with Quark and that Adobe is focused on the exciting opportunities available to the company, its stockholders, employees and customers," says an Adobe spokesman, who said the offer from Quark "failed to state any material terms that could constitute a firm and bona fide offer, including price."

(Los Angeles Times 26 Aug 98) What's behind Quark's sudden offer for its much-larger competitor? The company says the timing is related to a sudden dip in Adobe's stock price: "This is not based on anything else but our evaluation of the company's stock," says Quark CEO F. Fred Ebrahimi. "Is there something wrong with being a capitalist? Well if so, that's too bad." (Investor's Business Daily 27 Aug 98)

CANADIAN INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE

Canadian Industry Minister John Manley has unveiled plans for a high-speed Internet backbone, capable of moving data at speeds 1.5 million times faster than is possible using an ordinary 28.8 Kbps modem. Dubbed CA*net3, the \$120-million project is being touted as a showcase for domestic technology firms, as well as companies following Canada's lead in building third-generation Internet infrastructure. CANARIE, a Canadian research consortium, and a group led by Bell Canada will build the system, which could be fully operational by October. Initially, only the most advanced computers will be capable of handling the network's speed and capacity, restricting its use to university researchers and certain government laboratories that currently use another CANARIE research network. (Toronto Star 26 Aug 98)

CLOSING EUROPE'S TECHNOLOGY GAP

Analysts are predicting that by 2005, Europe may have significantly narrowed its technology gap with the U.S., thanks to the unifying influence of the euro currency, which will draw in new investment, and deregulated telecommunications markets, which will attract innovation and reduce prices overall. Currently, low PC prices (even lower than U.S. prices in many cases) are making Europe the world's fastest-growing major PC market, with sales up 17.8% for the first half of the year. Meanwhile Europe is pouring money into high-speed data networks, augmented by the estimated \$125 billion that European companies are spending to prepare their computers for the coming euro. "Market liberalization is going to free up investment in Europe, and the money's going to go into high tech," says the president of Cisco Systems' European operations. "A new economy is going to be built as a result." (Business Week 31 Aug 98)

L&H THRIVES ON MULTILINGUAL ROOTS

Leading speech recognition software maker Lernout & Hauspie Speech Products NV is located in the heart of a region known as "Language Valley," aptly named for an area in Belgium, which is surrounded by France, the Netherlands and Germany. The country has three official languages -- French, Dutch and German -- and English is also widely spoken. "They have a much more global outlook than their competitors," says the head of a software consulting firm. "The world doesn't speak just one language." L&H, which focuses on both speech and language translation businesses, is releasing its Voice Express Pro next month --a product that enables users to give verbal commands and dictate documents to a computer -- and another product, code-named Popeye, will let software developers add voice recognition to e-mail programs. L&H is also working on a product called iTranslator, which will translate Web pages from one language to another and allow users to do multilingual Web searches. Initially, the intended market will be non-English speakers, but that's going to change. "...In four to six years, there will be more Web sites in Chinese than in English," says the company's CEO. (Investor's Business Daily 26 Aug 98)

NEW HANDHELD DEVICE FOR HALF THE PRICE

The daVinci handheld device, introduced Monday by Royal Consumer Business Products, looks and functions like 3Com's popular PalmPilot but, at suggested prices of \$99 and \$150, costs only about half as much as the PalmPilot's \$250-and-up pricetag. The basic daVinci model includes a 256-kilobyte memory, writing recognition software, a docking station, PC synchronization and an optional keyboard, and the high-end daVinci Pro boasts a 1 megabyte memory, built-in e-mail and fax software, and a dockingstation with a PCMCIA card modem slot. The basic version is expected to hit the shelves in October, and the Pro in November. "We want to hit the high-volume price points," says Royal's executive director of marketing. The daVinci uses a proprietary script and its own operating system. (Computer Retail Week 26 Aug 98)

THE LONELY NET

A two-year, \$1.5-million study by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, funded by the National Science Foundation and major technology companies, has concluded that Internet use appears to cause a decline in psychological well-being. A director of the study says, "We are not talking here about the extremes. These were normal adults and their families, and on average, for those who used the Internet most, things got worse." One hour a week of Internet use led on average to an increase of 1% on the depression scale, an increase of 0.04% on the loneliness scale, and a loss of 2.7 members of the subject's social circle (which averaged 66 people). Although the study participants used e-mail, chat rooms, and other social features of the Internet to interact with others, they reported a decline in interaction with their own family members and a reduction in their circles of friends. "Our hypothesis is, there are more cases where you're building shallow relationships [on the Internet], leading to an overall decline in feeling of connection to other people." Since the 169 study participants, all from the Pittsburgh area, were not chosen in a random selection process, it is not clear how the findings apply to the general population, but a RAND Corporation senior scientist says, "They did an extremely careful scientific study, and it's not a result that's easily ignored." (New York Times 30 Aug 98)

PATENT LAW IN THE INFORMATION AGE

The U.S. Patent and Trademark has in recent months offered patents to at least five online business models, including an award last week to CyberGold Inc. for creating a system that lets Web users earn money by clicking on banner ads and corporate Web sites (a business model described in the patent as online "attention brokerage"). University of Texas at Austin law professor Mark Lemley fears that this trend could stifle competition by granting overly broad patents, whereas University of California at Berkeley law professor Pamela Samuelson thinks it's reasonable to recognize that business models can be in and of themselves technological advances. Samuelson says, "If patents worked for manufacturers, surely they will work for the information economy." (New York Times Cybertimes 28 Aug 98)

LUCENT SERVES UP NEW PERSPECTIVE ON TENNIS

Lucent Technologies has debuted a new TV camera that gives tennis match viewers the ability to see the whole court from the side, thereby making it easier to follow the game as the ball is lobbed from one end to the other. It has also tested a system that shows all of the movements made by a player during a match, using a technology similar to that used for the Doppler Weather map. The technology uses computers and video to track information and display it, says a Lucent researcher. Meanwhile, IBM will

be covering the U.S. Open, which begins Monday, on its Web site, which will feature an interactive camera that allows users to aim it and zoom in and out of their views of the action. The site will also have real-time scores and statistics, and live chat sessions hosted by special guests. (Wall Street Journal 28 Aug 98)

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN HOLOGRAPHIC STORAGE

Academic and industrial scientists have been researching ways to use holograms in information storage devices, but one key disadvantage has been the tendency of holograms to be very "volatile" -- reading them tends to degrade their content. Now a group at the California Institute of Technology has discovered that by using special, thin crystals of lithium niobate that incorporate traces of iron and manganese atoms, the resulting holograms were much more stable. The researchers found that they could record data durably in the crystals using ultraviolet light, while at the same making a hologram using two red laser beams. The UV light stimulated the iron and manganese atoms to liberate the electrons, ensuring that the hologram created by the lasers was stored by both types of atoms. The resulting hologram could be read by illuminating it with red laser light alone, which did not excite the UV-triggered manganese atoms, so they retained the imprinted data without loss (there was some degradation in the iron atom version). The work "is a step toward a practical holographic storage device," says Hans Coufal of the IBM Almaden Research Center, but says the technique will need to be modified to bring it to the mass market. (Scientific American Sep 98)

COOL CHIPS

Using technology developed by Intel and NCR, Columbia, S.C.-based KryoTech is selling PCs that use chip-cooling technology similar to that in your household refrigerator. Cooling chips down speeds up performance because the reduced thermonuclear resistance in transistors and interconnects means bits of data can move faster. The company's "thermally accelerated" systems replace the traditional cooling fan with a design that places the computer atop an environmentally friendly fridge -- cold air is pumped up from below to the processor, which is encased in an insulated "kryo cavity" that keeps the cold inside, protecting other parts of the machine from the ice and condensation. (Popular Science Sep 98)

DEPOSITIONS CONTINUE IN MICROSOFT TRIAL

In preparations for the U.S. Justice Department's antitrust suit against Microsoft, government lawyers questioned Microsoft chief Bill Gates for two days last week and the federal judge who will preside over the September 23 trial has indicated that the government can question Gates for "as long as it takes." Microsoft officials are accused of meeting with Netscape in 1995 and illegally offering to split the market for Web browsers. Gates has called the allegation "an outrageous lie." (AP 29 Aug 98)

AOL JUST GROWS AND GROWS

Without even counting its CompuServe members or its membership beyond the U.S., the America Online membership figure now surpasses 13 million subscribers. Peak usage now is 750,000 users at a time (compared to 400,000 a year ago) and the current number of modems available is 800,000 (compared to 447,000 last year). Modem growth rate is 34% higher than the rate of membership increase. (Investor's Business Daily 28 Aug 98)

LISTENING TO E-MAIL

A new service called CoolMail <http://www.planetarymotion.com/> allows e-mail users to call from any phone and hear their e-mail read to them via automated voice after they listen to a 10-second advertisement. The call is free from a local access number and costs 10 cents a minute otherwise. A reply feature is also available. (USA Today 28 Aug 98)

NEW! by R. F. Mariano

Between Bonnie, Danielle and Earl.... Florida has done rather well in not facing the brunt of the ever fearsome Hurricane. We've had plenty of rain, less than gale force winds and rough seas but all in all, the only thing hampered was working on the boat outdoors and unfortunately, fishing. In this issue, we're going to begin the before and after with the development of the 30' Imperial Cruiser. This is the vessel that's getting the Furuno Radar, Northstar DGPS and Garmin 235 GPS/Depthsounder. But these goodies are secondary to the actual "labors of love" being enjoyed in getting this vessel ready for the superb Florida Fishing Season and of course, our detailing of our visits to various marinas, participating in fishing tournaments and giving seminars about the electronics on our boats and the interfacing of a laptop.

To begin at the right point, I'd like to show you a before and after of the boat's hull. My son Vincent worked his tail off getting the hull to look brand spanking new. He first washed the hull then he wet sanded it to his satisfaction. Then came the compounding with an electric buffer and finally, the application of the wax and a final buffering. But all that came after he and his brother Victor rebuilt the V6 4.3 litre engines. This boat is, for all intents and purposes almost brand new at this point.

Once we begin the installation of the electronics, which is covered elsewhere in this column, you'll understand why I said that. Personally, I can't wait to get going on our "jaunts" to various marinas, fishing clubs and yacht clubs. Doing computer related seminars will be "old hat" to me but doing them for the marine community will be new and I might add, a highly anticipated joy. After all, I do believe that if I had the equipment and knowledge I have today thirty years ago, I would've never left the Party/Charter Boat business. Being able to do things one can do with a laptop interfaced with the Radar, DGPS and Sonar is true navigational power and then some.

About the Installation of the Northstar 951XD;

Northstar supplied everything for the installation of the 951XD but the antenna mounting hardware. That's understandable since the variations involved with each installation are virtually unlimited. I obtained a Shakespear 173 compact fibreglas whip and installed that in the Differential Antenna's tip top. The actual installation went so easily that there is very little to write about. The main item was connection the

patch cable to interface the laptop with the DGPS. That was also easy. In reality, a serial mouse cord will do the job nicely. Once all the electronics are installed... and the decals are placed on the hull, we go in the water. Then we first get the opportunity to tell you about how the Northstar performs. I must admit... I used a Northstar on a friend's boat and we so impressed with it that I decided months ago I'd fight for the opportunity to tell you all about such a wonderful navigational aid. Coupled with the Navionics Chart Chips... this baby is hard to beat. Navionics... they make just about the very best in "Charts on a Chip".

When we decided to go in this direction, we also wanted to tell you about some of the finest software packages available for the both the boater and avid fisherman. We have them and will tell you all about them. Software packages like Maptech, Chart View Pro, Florida Fish & Tide Guide, Fishnet and of course, Thumbs Plus with our own compiled library of east coast fish.

In addition to the northstar, we'll be installing a Furuno Radar 1621mk2 and a Garmin 235 Depth Sounder. Of course we'll show the before and the after in regard to the installations. At about the same time we will be placing the Decals on the boat. You gotta see these to believe 'em. They're done by Graphitek in Vermont and will be installed by Jean Schemp of Jacksonville... perhaps the finest Specialty Marine Lettering and Sign Company in Jacksonville. More about that later.

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The Linux Advocate

Be back next week.....

Jasons Jive

Jason Sereno, STR Staff
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Hello everyone,

We've got a lot of catching up to do. In this installment of Jason's Jive we'll take a look at a couple of great games, Red Baron II from Sierra and Interplay's Redneck Rampage Rides Again. But first I'll tell you what I think about Mad Catz' Panther XL.

Panther XL

a complete 3D combat controller
\$79.95
Mad Catz
<http://www.madcatz.com>

All right, so John Romero seems to love this controller. He was quoted as saying, "If you wanna deathmatch with the big boys The Panther XL is your weapon of choice!". So I should be saying something similar to that right about now. However, there are a few drawbacks to this controller that keep me from giving it the title of "PC Controller of the Millennium".

The Panther XL is supposed to be the last controller you ever buy. It contains a total of seventeen programmable buttons, a tracking ball, flight stick, throttle, and a port for a connecting rudder. This is a heavy duty combat controller and great for avid gamers.

However, there has been a lot of complaints concerning the flightstick. You'd think with two 4-way point-of-view hatches, two thumb buttons, one for the index finger, and even an extra for the pinky, every gamer would love this stick. Despite all of this, users with larger hands have found the pinky button basically unusable and the stick as a whole hard to operate. I didn't find these problems myself, but the Panther XL digital stick was a little stiffer to maneuver opposed to other flight sticks. Those of you who don't appreciate touchy controls could benefit from this controller.

The tracking ball is the second half of this unit. It is designed to be operated with your left hand while playing a game such as Quake or Duke Nukem. (I'm neutral). This tracking ball can also be used to replace your mouse with a special program that can be run in Windows. I tried it and the performance on my computer was a little slower than using the mouse and the tracking ball was awkward to control. I also enjoy eating things like chips or other greasy food when I play games, if I were to do that with the Panther XL I would surely damage the tracking ball.

Surrounding the tracking ball are five rather large buttons. Three are on the top and two are on the right side. Laying between the joystick and tracking ball is a throttle control. On the topside of the controller is a port for a rudder. All of the buttons on the Panther XL are user programmable. There is a front end program you can run in Windows before you start a game with the Panther XL to configure the controller. Most popular games are supported such as: Unreal, Jedi Knight, Redneck Rampage, Turok, Airwarrior II, and over 25 others.

So this is a very good controller, but it does have some drawbacks. Snack eating gamers and users with large hands may find some minor problems with it. the Panther XL is a very good deal at \$79.99 however, and I found it pretty enjoyable. Look for it in stores now.

Red Baron II
Windows 95 CD-ROM
\$49.95

Sierra On-Line
<http://www.sierra.com>

All right, so you think flight sims these days are all starting to look alike? Me too. All of them have user definable difficulty settings, extensive network support, amazing polygon graphics, and of course a groundbreaking artificial intelligence system. So why should you go out and buy a new one?

Well, Red Baron II from Sierra does have all of these accessories and a few added bonuses that others on the market do not. The first is a custom paint shop that is reminiscent of Sierra's Nascar and IndyCar series. Graphics can be imported or you can also alter the planes paint scheme like you would in Sierra's Front Page Sports football or baseball series.

It also has a very extensive mission generator. It is very simple and allows you to create your own waypoints on a historically correct WWI map. You can also use it to control squadrons and the types of aircraft that fly in each battle. The truly groundbreaking feature is Dynamix's new 3Space 2.0 Engine. This engine's performance was superb. Gameplay was not effected at all when large amounts of planes entered my vicinity.

Something else you can look forward to is the WWI booklet that comes with the game. It has a lot of interesting information about the first world war. It also contains diagrams and flight maneuvers of each plane which could be used to your advantage in multiplayer dogfights. Of course Red Baron II is also the really only World War I flight simulation on the market right now. Although this a quality simulation, to be honest, the looks aren't all that different from other sims. The speed, on the other hand, is very noticeable.

So, until there comes a truly groundbreaking step in the evolution of flight sims, this game filled with polygons and textured mapping is going to probably stay king. It doesn't have the complicated computer systems of the modern flight sims, where you lock on and kill someone that is forty meters behind you. It just stays with the simple yet aged old concept of, "catch me if you can!" nRedneck Rampage Rides Again PC-CDROM \$39.95

Interplay Incorporated
<http://www.interplay.com>

The original was, and still is, one of my favorite games of all time. So I was very excited to hear of the release of Redneck Rampage Rides Again. 14 new action packed levels which include new weapons and enemies fill this game up to the teeth with mayhem and laughter. Also included is a new soundtrack that really makes you feel like killing some alien hillbilly clones.

The opening sequence of Redneck Rampage Rides Again shows Leonard and Bubba trying to navigate home in an alien space ship. After crashing through a cosmonauts' space station, the duo finally arrive on earth. However, they are a long ways from home. So of course the goal of the game is to reach your hometown of Hickston, alive.

Along the way you may find it useful if you destroy some of the Alien

clones that seem to possess a need to make your trip as difficult as possible. Some of the new characters in the game include the dynamite wielding cheerleader, Daisy Mae, and the King of Rock ' Roll himself! Dogs and a special hybrid of jack o' lopes also tend to be very discouraging at times.

But don't sweat it, this sequel has a few new weapons you can use at your disposal too. (Don't worry, the alien pectoral shooter is still there.) Instead of shooting just normal dynamite with your crossbow, now you can shoot dynamite-loaded chickens. I'm sure you can imagine where the dynamite is lodged in. If you want to get up close and personal with the aliens, you can use the always exciting slingblade. And whenever you use it you hear a voice very reminiscent of Billy Bob Thornton, "Mmmm-Hmmm". It's very humorous.

What really adds dimension to this game is the use of automobiles. Leonard is able to drive not only a motorcycle in this sequel, but also a hydroplane. They are both loaded with their own special kind of artillery too. In case your run out of ammo for either vehicle, you can just run over any alien that comes your way. But don't get too reckless because if you crash your vehicle, you crash yourself. What is really cool about these two accessories is you can use them for pretty much a whole level if you want to.

With levels like a brothel, riverboat, chicken killing factory, and many others, it may not be a bad idea. Each level is very immense and contains at least three of four secrets. Just when you think you've covered a whole level, you'll open a door and find an underground well that leads you to a whole new section. In one level the current from a river takes you on a wild ride through some kind of a water purification plant. From there you have to climb up about four stories on a ladder and enter a maze of caves to find Bubba and end the level. The developers of this game really made each level an adventure.

To help you obtain the true hillbilly experience, Mojo Nixon has returned to put yet another soundtrack together for this game. It's great because it truly captures the spirit of being a redneck. (Take it from me, someone that has bailed hay, detassled corn, and used to live on a pig farm!) Song lyrics reiterate the life of rednecks and their guns, overweight women, and farm animals. This really makes the game complete.

I was very satisfied with Redneck Rampage Rides Again. It's not a whole lot different from the first game, as far as graphics and sounds are concerned. However it has gone up a level in excitement, action, and of course stupidity. If you're looking for a 3D action game with large amounts of humor and outrageousness, definitely pick up Interplay's Redneck Rampage Rides Again.

Until next time,

Jason

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- * Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
- * Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately
- * Please use a single font in an article. TTF Times New Roman is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

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STReport International Online Magazine

Classics & Gaming Section
Editor Dana P. Jacobson
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> From the Atari Editor's Desk

"Saying it like it is!"

I can't believe that this is Labor Day weekend already! It seems like yesterday that we opened our pool and had our first barbecue. Those three

months just blew right by!

I really shouldn't complain [too] much, however. I had a total of five weeks vacation - spent a lot of time in the pool, working in the yard, spending time with family and friends, countless barbecues, and numerous times just relaxing on the deck with various cold beverages. It's been our first summer here at the house and an enjoyable one. It was satisfying to see the good results of our labors to the yard and exterior of the house. Flower and vegetable gardens flourished, grass actually grew, and the pool was clean. Still some work to do but I'm waiting for some cooler weather for that. It's been great so far; it's time for the next season to move in. In the meantime, I'll enjoy the last [unofficial] weekend of the summer.

It's a long holiday weekend, so take it easy on the roads. Remember, schools are opening so be extra careful out there. If you're going to drink, stay off the roads; the life you save could very well be mine!

Until next time...

Croft Soft Software Press Release
3 August 1998

Atari Times Special Edition...

We are pleased to announce the first 'special edition' of the Atari Times.

This is the first (and hopefully not the last) ever paper based issue of the Atari Times. It runs to 44 A5 pages.

Special Edition 1 is centered on tutorials and contains some from previous issues of AT in a the more convenient paper format, as well as some which haven't appeared in the disk magazine at all...

The first 50 copies of the special edition are in color on high quality paper, however due to the high cost after these are sold further copies will be in black and white - make sure you get your order in quick to get this rare, limited, once-in-a-lifetime color edition!

If this first special edition is a success, we will consider further, more generic, special editions to supplement the on-going HTML magazine

Prices including postage and packing are shown below. Unfortunately, we do not currently have any distributors so all orders must be sent to the UK.

Please note, we are only just about covering our costs (ie printing, copying, envelopes and postage), and we are not making any profit from this venture.

Special Edition 1 is available NOW!

Prices (inc. P&P)

UK:

#2.00 (2 UK Pounds)

Europe:

#2.50 (2 UK Pounds and 50 pence)

Rest of World:
#3.50 (3 UK Pounds and 50 pence)

All payments should be made in Sterling and are payable to 'Colin Polonowski'

Payment Methods:

UK:
Cheque
Postal Order
Cash (NOT RECOMMENDED)

Rest of World:
Cheque drawn on UK bank
Sterling Eurocheque
Post Office payment (GIRO)
International Money Order

All orders should be sent to:

AT Special Edition,
c/o Colin Polonowski,
The Croft,
Hope Rd,
Nibley,
Nr Yate,
Bristol,
BS37 5JH,
ENGLAND

Please allow 14 days for delivery...

DISTRIBUTORS

If you don't live in the UK, and would like to help spread the Atari Times Special Edition around the globe, we need your help!

We're looking for distributors in as many countries as possible. We'll send you a FREE color copy of the Atari Times Special Edition, all you need to do is copy it (in color or black and white) and sell it!

You don't need to send us any money, all we ask is that you only charge what it costs you to print/copy and send.

If you are interested in helping to distribute the Atari Times Special Edition(s) then please get in touch at the address above or e-mail polonowski@zett.net.co.uk

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Any further information regarding the Atari Times Special Editions will be available from the Atari Times Homepage at <http://www.users.zett.net.co.uk/polonowski/atimes/>

Or, e-mail polonowski@zett.net.co.uk

Unfortunately, we cannot supply further details via post due to time constraints...

AtariNews: On The Prowl
09/02/98

LATEST HEADLINES:

A LOOK BACK AT THE WORLD OF ATARI '98

Were you unable to go to the World of Atari '98? AtariNews: On The Prowl has some links to places to find out more about what happened there and see pictures of what you missed:

Next Generation Online's World of Atari Report:

<http://www.next-generation.com/jsmid/news/4268.html>

WIRED: Something Old, Something New:

<http://www.wired.com/news/news/culture/story/14613.html>

IC WHEN: Don Thomas looks back at the show

<http://www.icwhen.com>

NEW SOUND TOOL FOR THE LYNX COMING SOON

Carl Forhan is pleased to announce the soon release of SFX for the Atari Lynx. This exciting new audio tool should appeal to developers and tinkerers alike. Carl is currently accepting pre-orders for the SFX package (no money is required at this time). For more information and to place a pre-order, visit the SFX web pages linked to The Lynx Domain.

<http://www.millcomm.com/~forhan/lynx.html>

PRICE IS RISING FOR LYNX VISION

Wizztronics recently demoed their "Lynx Vision" Lynx-TV adapter at World of Atari '98 in Las Vegas. The current estimated price is \$199, and according to their web page, Wizztronics is now accepting orders for this device.

<http://www.wizztronics.com/lynx.htm>

HAVE YOU SIGNED THE PETITION TO HASBRO YET? WANT MORE LYNX GAMES?

There are currently only 116 names on the petition to Hasbro. Would you like to see more games on your Atari systems? Systems like the Jaguar, or more realistically the Lynx? There is a chance that if Hasbro knows people will buy games for the Lynx, that they may just release more, or even better, re-release it. But we need a lot more names on this petition! We need your help! Sign it today!

<http://www.geocities.com/timessquare/arcade/8063>

Send any comments or submissions for "AtariNews: On The Prowl" to: Brian Gudzevich (Editor) at: Brionhold@aol.com Sponsoring web sites:

-The Atarian Atmosphere: <http://atmosphere.atari.org>

-The Jaguar's Domain: <http://www.millcomm.com/~forhan/jaguar.html>

>In This Week's Gaming Section - PSX and N64 Price Reductions!

Micropose! "Xena"! Nyko News!
"World of Atari" Report
s!
"Danger Girl"!! And MU
CH more!

>From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!

I have to tell you that I'm really jealous of those of you who were able to attend the World of Atari show a couple of weeks ago!! It sounded like it was an incredible time. Congrats to Keita Iida, John Hardie, and Rich Tsukiji for their enthusiasm and diligence in making it possible. All of that Atari nostalgia in one place at one time! And the many people from our past. I had to order the video to see what I missed; but reading the various reports, I realize just how much. The time was right as I was on vacation, but the money just wasn't there. As you can imagine, being a "new" homeowner can be a financial strain the first couple of years. I hope it may be worthwhile for them to have another show in a year or so. Anyway, we've got some coverage of the show this week, as well as tons of other gaming news and information. So let's get to it, shall we!!

Until next time...

>Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile - The Latest Gaming News!

Sony Computer Entertainment America Lowers Price

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Aug. 25) BUSINESS WIRE - August 25, 1998 - Lower Prices on Hardware, Software and Peripherals Make PlayStation the System to Beat this Holiday Season

Continuing its role as the undisputed industry leader, Sony Computer Entertainment America announced today that effective August 30, its best-selling PlayStation game console will be available to consumers for \$129, a more than 10 percent reduction from its current manufacturers suggested retail price. As an additional benefit to consumers, the company also announced lower prices on several PlayStation-branded peripherals and the addition of more than a dozen best-selling games to the "Greatest Hits" collection, a series of the most popular PlayStation games available for as low as \$19.99.

In June 1998, Sony Computer Entertainment America introduced a new PlayStation hardware offering packaged with the Dual Shock(TM) Analog Controller and since its market introduction, this model has been widely embraced by consumers and retailers. Because the PlayStation business is experiencing a 60 percent increase in sales from this time last year, the company expects sales of the already popular console to increase following its price reduction to \$129, especially among first-time videogame

consumers.

"With a PlayStation now in approximately one in every 10 U.S. households, consumers have already demonstrated their overwhelming support and loyalty for our products," said Kaz Hirai, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "As a result of the popularity of the PlayStation worldwide, Sony Computer Entertainment has been able to grow the gaming category as a whole representing tremendous opportunities for our partners and ultimately, for the consumer. With today's announcement, the PlayStation experience becomes attractive to an even greater audience."

In just three years, PlayStation has become the dominant leader in videogame entertainment, with a North American installed base of more than 11.5 million consoles, and life-to-date software sales exceeding 85 million units. According to the life-to-date figures in the June report from the NPD Group, a leading source of information on the videogame industry, PlayStation currently enjoys an impressive 56.5 percent market share for next generation hardware and 64.2 percent market share for next generation software.

The pricing announcement is accompanied by the addition of several game titles to PlayStation's "Greatest Hits" series. The new "Greatest Hits" inductees include the following: Cool Boarders(TM) 2; Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back(TM); 1Extreme, formerly known as ESPN(r) Extreme Games; Jet Moto(TM) 2; and Twisted Metal(r) 2. With the new inductees, the "Greatest Hits" collection now includes more than 45 of the top-selling and most popular PlayStation games of all time. Consumers can find "Greatest Hits" titles for an MSRP of \$24.99, with many retailers advertising game titles for as low as \$19.99.

"With the announcement of our new pricing structure, the PlayStation business is poised to dominate the holiday selling season," said Jack Tretton, vice president, sales, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "It is clear to us that consumers are drawn to the PlayStation because of the ongoing entertainment value of our videogames titles. The 'Greatest Hits' series is an excellent opportunity for new PlayStation purchasers to get the very best of PlayStation and for core gamers to add classic titles to their existing libraries."

Also announced today, Sony Computer Entertainment America will lower the price on several PlayStation-branded peripherals. On August 30, consumers will be able to find PlayStation memory cards retailing at a low price of \$14.99 and in a variety of new colors, including: black, clear, gray, emerald and blue. In addition, consumers will be able to find lower prices on other peripheral units, including the Digital Controller for \$14.99; the Multi-tap for \$29.99; and the RFU Adapter for \$14.99.

Sony Slashes PSX Again; Nintendo Follows Suit

Aug. 26, 1998 (MULTIMEDIA WIRE, Vol. 5, No. 165 via COMTEX) -- The latest skirmishes in the next-generation console war began yesterday as Sony Computer Entertainment America and Nintendo locked horns in the run-up to Christmas.

Instead of taking the price of its PlayStation below the magic \$100 price-point, Sony yesterday opted to throw its Dual Shock Controller,

currently valued at \$32.99 at Best Buy [BBY], into the \$129 package.

However, with Sony's PSX-only unit currently shipping for \$129, Sony may offer rebates to retailers to allow them to offload unsold inventory, making a \$99 PlayStation a likely outcome for at least a couple of weeks.

Nintendo responded immediately with a tit-for-tat N64 price cut to \$129.95 with a \$10 instant coupon, redeemable on any of 23 N64 games, a controller or a Rumble Pak. However, consumers had been paying this price anyway, as Nintendo was offering retailers a rebate to cover the \$149-\$129 price differential.

Sony also announced lower prices on several PlayStation-branded peripherals and the addition of more than a dozen best-selling games to its "Greatest Hits" collection, with an MSRP of \$24.99.

Sony and Nintendo: Chronology of a Price War:

Sept 5, 1995: PlayStation launches in US at \$299.

May 16, 1996: Sony drops PSX to \$199 in US, claiming worldwide sales of 5m units, of which 1.2m were in N. America and 700k in Europe. More than 7m PlayStation games shipped in North America, Sony claims.

September 30, 1996: Nintendo launches N64 at \$199.95.

March 3, 1997: Sony drops PSX to \$149. Meanwhile, Nintendo has "no immediate plans" to drop prices on hardware or software.

March 17, 1997: Nintendo drops N64 from \$199 to \$149.95, matching Sony. Nintendo hopes to sell 5m more N64 units by this time next year to add to the existing 2m US installed base.

June 2, 1998: Sony cuts PSX price to \$129.99. Nintendo follows suit with an identical price cut.

August 25: Sony cuts PSX price to \$129.99, including Dual Shock Controller. Nintendo responds with identical price cut.

Source: MMWire

Sega Releases 1st Software for New Game Machine

TOKYO, Aug. 22 (Kyodo) -- Sega Enterprises Ltd. made a bid to regain its lost market share Saturday with the unveiling of "Sonic Adventure," the first game software for its new 128-bit Dreamcast home video game system set to hit stores in November.

Sega said it hopes to win back customers it lost to Sony Corp.'s PlayStation.

The company spent four years and hundreds of millions of yen to develop Sonic Adventure, the latest version of Sega's popular "Sonic the Hedgehog" video game series, which has been a big hit with sales of 20 million copies worldwide.

Sega plans to release the game by the end of this year, a Sega official

said.

The Dreamcast system -- equipped with a 128-bit processor produced by Hitachi Ltd., a customized Windows CE operating system developed by Microsoft Corp., and a 64-channel sound system made by Yamaha Corp. -- will be put on the market Nov. 20 with a price tag of 20,000 yen to 30,000 yen.

At the end of March this year, Sony's 32-bit PlayStation was the best-selling video game machine in the world with a 32.82 million units shipped.

Nintendo Co.'s 64-bit NINTENDO 64 ranked second with 16.14 million units shipped, and Sega's 32-bit Saturn lagged behind in third place with 8.86 million units shipped.

"Colony Wars: Vengeance" Blasts the Competition

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (July 20) BUSINESS WIRE - July 20, 1998 - How exactly perfection can be expanded on is simply an issue of time and space.

The time is 100 years after the League's victory in the original "Colony Wars," and the space you'll have to work with is seemingly infinite, from the distances between stars, to a planet's war-torn surface. "Colony Wars(tm): Vengeance," Psygnosis' 3D space combat epic exclusively on PlayStation(R) game console delivers space fury home to Earth.

Tides turn, as do allegiances, and this time you take on the persona of Mertens, an aspiring pilot bred on a distaste for the oppressive League of Free Nations' criminal treatment of the weakened Navy. The game launches you into a war waged in the name of justice, but justice is merely a thinly disguised way of saying "vengeance." "Colony Wars: Vengeance" is planned for release in November 1998.

"Colony Wars: Vengeance" features, then builds upon the qualities enjoyed in the original "Colony Wars"(tm). Complex, multiple-objective missions are action-packed with more fighters, and the game's engine, AI, graphics and physics models all are significantly upgraded. The gaming environment is richer with more animated and detailed objects, and the characters have distinguishable personalities and their callous nuances pack some memorable emotional punches.

In this living universe of deception, subterfuge and revenge, there are numerous plot twists and multiple endings sure to keep you on the edge of your seat. Overall, "Colony Wars: Vengeance" is a more involving gaming experience, going beyond the original from every angle.

In-depth storylines, tight gameplay control responses, and futuristic graphics that go beyond the realms of the sci-fi genre are all implemented into "Colony Wars: Vengeance" to redefine the way that space-shooters are perceived.

This highly anticipated sequel not only picks up the ever-evolving saga of the conflict between the League and the Navy, but it also starts all over at the beginning to a new adventure. A "promise and deliver" feature game that dwarfs a perfect predecessor. "Colony Wars: Vengeance" stands alone as the premier space epic and then leapfrogs over the horizon by

introducing all-new, planet-based missions.

Hit The Ground Running: The League has shut down the Navy's resources with the closure of the warp hole in one of the endings from the original "Colony Wars." This is where "Vengeance" picks up. In closing the Navy's supply channel, the League doomed the populace to a slow and painful demise.

The war that was initially limited to space is now thrown "surface side," as you'll be expected to traverse varied landscape areas in accordance with the protection of any Naval installations and/or strategic points. Five planetary missions await you as you pilot your vessel deep into the inner-atmosphere of surface warfare.

You'll captain an all-new "non-space" ship as you attempt to intercept and destroy all Navy opposition present on these varying planetary fronts. You'll remain committed to the seemingly impossible task of defending Navy outposts against all low altitude League assault vessels.

Re-invent your previously learned outer space flying virtuosity just inches from a planet's surface in these five varying planetary atmospheric environments present under the vast blanket of space.

Technological Advancements: Virtually every technological element of "Colony Wars: Vengeance" is new or significantly enhanced, making the game faster, darker, more intense and even more realistic. An updated and extremely optimized space combat engine increases mission populations significantly.

Big ships, too, are improved with weak spots and animating sections that you must seek out and fire upon in order to destroy the enemy vessel. An enhanced physics model for objects allows fighters to realistically spin out of control when hit by missiles until you make the proper corrections.

There are 24 total weapons, almost 50 percent more than in the original game. The game will also feature about 90 individual models and ships, all of which are new to "Vengeance." All of the models feature animating sections and textures. Additionally, collision is extremely accurate and runs four times faster than in the original "Colony Wars."

A new graphics engine supports a more detailed and captivating space environment that is loaded with nebulae, asteroid belts, space ship graveyards (see some of the relics from Colony Wars past), black and white holes, and mine fields. The game's overall look is darkened, hardened and realistic with a focus towards industrial techno-gothic, though glowing neon weapon effects, suns and other objects provide a startling contrast to this futuristic nightmare.

Planets appear spherical and have atmospheres, crafts and installations that appear distinctively advanced from their predecessors. Fighters don't just look better, they also fly better. There's also enhanced AI for wingmen and enemy aces alike. This allows for the implementation of realistic characteristics like inertia and gives you the ability to use objects within the nearby environment for distinct tactical advantages.

Climactic orchestral themes, from famous composers such as Beethoven and Dvorak will add a tried and true classical (pardon the pun) depth to the involved atmospheres. Dolby surround sound is used for the bold sound effects like explosions, roaring engines and weapon firing. Speech samples also convey messages and feedback from other pilots.

Ethan Hunt, 'Mission: Impossible' Drop in on Espionage

SAN JOSE, CALIF. (July 20) BUSINESS WIRE - July 20, 1998 - Infogrames Entertainment, Inc. announced today that "Mission: Impossible," the eagerly-awaited action, adventure title for the Nintendo 64(TM), is now shipping to major retail outlets nationwide.

Based on the Paramount Pictures feature film, the highly-charged, spy thriller engages players in a daring set of clandestine missions and covert operations in an espionage-filled world as secret-agent Ethan Hunt.

"Mission: Impossible" is sold out through Sept. 1. High consumer demand for the game has forced Infogrames to allocate product shipments to its national retail partners.

"Demand at both the consumer and retail levels for 'Mission: Impossible' has exceeded our wildest expectations," Mike Markey, vice president sales and marketing, Infogrames Entertainment, Inc., said.

Developed in-house by Infogrames, "Mission: Impossible" takes players on a whirlwind adventure from the Russian Embassy in Prague to CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., to the climax at Waterloo Station in London. Through each top-secret encounter, players must be cunning. Strategy, rather than mindless shooting rampages, is required to succeed.

"'Mission' jumps players directly into a fantasy world where they really feel like a top-secret agent in a dark world of counter-intelligence," Markey said. "This game delivers a heart-pounding adventure at a suspenseful pace, ensuring fans, from video game die-hards to casual players, endless hours of enjoyment."

Infogrames' title, published under the company's Ocean brand, revives the classic Mission: Impossible gadgets and weaponry, as players utilize tools including blow darts, exploding chewing gum, laser deflectors, night-vision goggles and face makers.

"Mission: Impossible" also incorporates the traditional teamwork and camaraderie of the original series, allowing players to interact with fellow Impossible Mission Force (IMF) members Jim Phelps, Sarah Davies, Andrew Dowey and Jack Keifer.

Befitting a summer blockbuster, Infogrames is supporting "Mission: Impossible" with a \$2 million marketing campaign. This summer, movie trailers are playing in more than 7,000 theater screens nationwide. The company also plans a series of television and radio spots this fall.

The one-player adventure for the Nintendo 64 is now shipping to retail outlets including, but not limited to, Toys 'R' Us, Electronics Boutique, Babbages, Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart, Sears and Montgomery Wards at an estimated retail price of \$59.95.

Accolade's New Big Air Snowboarding Game to Feature 10 Bands, and More

SAN JOSE, CALIF. (July 29) BUSINESS WIRE - July 29, 1998 - Game to Feature Five Professional Snowboarders and Hot Soundtrack Including Songs From Blink 182 and Nine Other Bands.

Accolade, a leading publisher and developer of video game software, announced today that 10 bands, nine licensed snowboarding companies, seven clothing manufacturers and five professional snowboarders will appear in the company's upcoming snowboarding game, Big Air(TM).

The game will be available for the PlayStation(R) game console in the fall of this year.

"We are really trying to capture the authentic look and feel of snowboarding," said Monte Singman, senior producer of Big Air. "Big Air's exciting gameplay and inclusion of licensed music, pro snowboarders, official snowboards and gear lets gamers partake in a true snowboarding experience."

Gold-selling MCA recording artist, Blink 182, will have two songs on the game's soundtrack, "Dammit" and "Untitled." In addition to Blink 182, nine other bands will appear on the Big Air soundtrack: punk bands Diesel Boy, Limp, Leatherface and Snuff, ska bands Gangster Fun and Monkey, rock bands Caustic Notions and The Odd Numbers, as well as alternative club band Andalusia.

Users will have the ability to customize the soundtrack by selecting the songs and play order during the game. The Big Air soundtrack will include more than 25 songs.

Five professional snowboarders in Big Air appear as "boss" characters and include Nike Big Air champion Mike Beallo as well as Burton team rider and this year's Playboy Halfpipe champion Ian Spiro. Three additional snowboarders will also appear in the game.

Big Air will feature more than 80 real snowboards from such manufacturers as Palmer, Ride, Morrow, Joyride, Arbor, Maui and Sons International, Burton, K2, and Nitro. Authentic clothing from such manufacturers as Wave Rave, Westbeach, Quiksilver and Sessions will also be included in the game. Snowboarding companies K2, Ride, Maui and Sons International and Burton will contribute clothing as well.

Big Air allows players to choose from 30 courses including five unique Halfpipe, Big Air, Boardercross, Slalom or Freeride competitions in any of six countries. Courses are featured in Canada, Japan, Scotland, Switzerland, United States, and Germany. As players win competitions, they gain points and are awarded the opportunity to "travel" to other countries and compete in advanced snowboarding contests.

Big Air offers intense multiplayer action via horizontal or vertical split screen and supports PlayStation analog and Dual Shock(R) controllers.

989 Studios Unleashes an All New Concept in Racing

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (July 30) BUSINESS WIRE - July 30, 1998 - 989 Studios, formerly known as Sony Interactive Studios America, announced today that it is publishing the upcoming title Running Wild(TM) -- available late

October, exclusively for the PlayStation(R) game console.

Created by Universal Interactive Studios Inc., the producers of the top-selling PlayStation game Crash Bandicoot(TM), Running Wild fuses the high-speed action of traditional racing-style games with whimsical animal characters who compete entirely on foot.

"We are pleased to add Running Wild to the stable of great titles 989 Studios is releasing for the PlayStation," said Jeffery Fox, vice president, marketing, 989 Studios. "Running Wild combines cartoon-style animal characters into a compelling racing environment. The result is a videogame experience which is perfect for gameplayers of all ages and skill levels; this is a family game."

A departure from traditional racing games, Running Wild features a cast of six zany, fast-running characters. Each character has a signature racing style and special attributes that add to their superior animal athleticism.

Running Wild challenges gameplayers to rocket through six courses of rigorous terrain, including hot lava fields, frozen rivers, drainage tunnels and winding city streets. In addition to the high-speed race, obstacle ridden game environments provide a challenging element to the gameplay.

"Running Wild is one of the first combination racing and character action games, which are the number one and number three most popular console video game genres," said Mark Cerny, president of Universal Interactive Studios. "The title offers a stunning 60 frames per second to support intense speed and action, and boasts excellent depth of play with mighty power-ups that let players really 'run wild'."

Adding to Running Wild's appeal to gameplayers of all ages and skill levels is the option that allows gameplayers to decrease the game's level of difficulty. Difficulty levels can be adjusted by accessing the "Auto Run" option which automatically operates the accelerator button on the game pad, allowing gameplayers to focus on maneuvering the characters -- a helpful feature for younger gameplayers.

Featuring adjustable game modes, Running Wild roars at 60 frames per second in single player mode. Running Wild also features a multi-player mode that allows up to four players to compete simultaneously on a four-way split screen.

Key Features

- Auto Run: lowers difficulty settings and allows gameplayers of all ages to compete in the fast action race
- Richly textured environments with crisp graphics and 3-D polygons creates an immersive game-playing experience
- Viewing Modes: split-screen racing action in vertical, horizontal or letterbox
- Control up to six fast and furious characters, including Brazz the zebra, Gwynne the rabbit, Boris the elephant, General the ram, Coronado the bull and Mei Ling the panda
- Varying Racing Modes: challenge, circuit, time trials, practice

- race and power-ups
- Six detailed worlds loaded with power-ups, hidden areas and menacing level bosses
- Adding to the blistering racing action is the precision control feature which allows game characters to increase momentum and experience friction based on the terrain they are racing on
- Supports analog and dual shock controllers

THQ, B.A.S.S. to Debut First 3-D Fishing Game for PC

GREENSBORO, N.C. (Aug. 5) ENTERTAINMENT WIRE - Aug. 5, 1998 - Game publisher THQ Inc. and the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society Inc. (B.A.S.S.) have teamed to debut the first 3-D PC fishing game, "BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition," at the 1998 BASS Masters Classic Tournament, Aug. 6-8, in Greensboro.

The official game of B.A.S.S., "BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition" is scheduled to ship to retailers across North America Sept. 8. A limited number of copies of the game will be on sale at the B.A.S.S. and THQ booths during the Classic Outdoor Show, inside the Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center.

The first and only 3-D fishing game available for the PC, "BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition" is the most realistic fishing simulation on the market. The game features 3-D lakes and environments, amazing underwater views and the world's best-known fishing license: the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society.

"We couldn't be happier to be participating with B.A.S.S. on a game that not only provides a true fishing simulation but also is fun to play," said Germaine Gioia, vice president, marketing, THQ. "The Classic -- the Super Bowl of bass fishing -- is a great opportunity to introduce this ultimate fishing game to all of the BASS fishing enthusiasts."

"BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition" features tips on casting and lure selection from bass-fishing legends Roland Martin, Shaw Grigsby, Ken Cook and Paul Elias.

Based on the most prestigious bass-fishing tournament in the world, "BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition" challenges players to test their skills against those of real-life tournament pros on actual competition lakes like Lake Fork, Lake Mead, Lake Minnetonka and Lake Logan-Martin.

"'BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition' really captures the intricacies and the excitement of competitive bass fishing on the BASSMASTER Tournament Trail," said Charlie Shamburger, director of licensing, B.A.S.S. "We couldn't be more pleased with the job THQ has done in creating this game, and we are thrilled to be able to feature it here in Greensboro during the Classic."

In addition to the single-player format, "BASS Masters Classic: Tournament Edition" supports free multiplayer tournament competition for up to eight cyber-anglers over LAN, modem or Internet.

Berkeley Systems Launches YOU DON'T KNOW JACK for PSX

BERKELEY, CALIF. (Aug. 6) BUSINESS WIRE - Aug. 6, 1998 - Berkeley Systems Inc., a division of Sierra, today announced its award winning game YOU DON'T KNOW JACK(R) will soon be available for the PlayStation(R) game console.

This edition of YOU DON'T KNOW JACK will turn any PlayStation into a party with more than 1,400 hilarious questions, multi-player action, and features specifically for the PlayStation. Created in partnership with Jellyvision Inc., of Chicago, the title will fall under the Sierra Attractions brand of games when it ships this November with an estimated street price of \$39.95.

"YOU DON'T KNOW JACK for PlayStation is the most fun you can have in your living room with your clothes on," stated Kory Stradinger, general manager of Berkeley Systems. "Viewing YOU DON'T KNOW JACK game play on television will enhance the irreverent quiz show party game experience by bringing the TV metaphor full circle."

Recreating the swift pace of a TV game show and the sarcastic musings of a game show host, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK takes players on a wild ride from the green room all the way to prime time. YOU DON'T KNOW JACK for the PlayStation game console combines classic trivia with pop-culture references in a witty, brain-twisting mixture that is as challenging as it is entertaining.

The game features original music, sound effects and hilarious dialogue as well as supporting new PlayStation peripherals such as the Dual Shock(TM) analog controller. In addition to its fast pace and hilarious content, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK for the PlayStation game console takes the tradition of social gaming to a new level by letting up to three players compete while lounging in the comfort of their own living room.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK for PlayStation contains favorite question types from past JACKs such as the DisOrDat(TM), ThreeWay(TM), Shortie, Impossible Question, and the Jack Attack(R). High culture and pop culture collide in all of the questions found in this irreverent quiz show party game.

The original YOU DON'T KNOW JACK, created by Jellyvision and Berkeley Systems, became an instant classic when it was launched in 1995. The series has garnered more than 35 awards and includes YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Volume 2, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK Volume 3, and the all new YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Ride shipping in November. YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Irreverent Collection combines the entire JACK series and will also be released this fall.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Ride has an estimated street price of \$29.95 and YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Irreverent Collection has an estimated retail price of \$49.95. Both will be available for Windows 95, Windows 3.1, and Macintosh.

AUG 11, 1998, M2 Communications - Konami of America, Inc., leading developer of electronic entertainment for the home video game and PC game markets, is now shipping its newest addition to the Konami Sports Series, Bottom Of The 9TH '99 for Sony PlayStation.

Bottom Of The 9TH '99 features improved 3D texture-mapped players; faster gameplay, smooth, arcade-style batter/pitcher interface; nine polygon body types; six playing modes; 16 beautifully rendered stadiums; multiple camera angles; and a real-time "play-by-play" announcer. In addition, the game includes the 1998 season-opening team rosters, incorporating all of the off-season trades and free agent signings.

"Konami has taken the best features of last year's edition and dramatically improved the overall graphics and sound, taking gameplay to another level with Bottom Of The 9TH '99 for the Sony PlayStation," states Jon Sloan, Konami's director of Marketing. "With the addition this year of texture-mapped players, new motion-captured animations, the exciting play-by-play announcer and the new scenario mode, it compares favorably to any baseball game on the market."

The six modes, which include Training, Exhibition, Full Season, Scenario, Playoff and All-star modes, provide a wide variety of game play options. For instance, in the Scenario mode, the user can play a specific part of a dramatic game the score is tied, two outs, the bases are loaded and you're up with a full count in the bottom of the ninth inning. The Training mode allows gamers to hone pitching, fielding, batting and base-running skills.

With more than 750 Major League Baseball Players Association players' career statistics and photos, gamers have the option to play as general managermaking their own trades and putting together a dream team that will take them to the Fall Classic.

BTI Signs "Genesis" as U.S. Sales Agent

TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Canadian Corp News, AUGUST 19, 1998)--Battery Technologies Inc., today announced that it has entered into an exclusive sales agreement with Genesis Sales and Marketing of St. Louis, Missouri to introduce and sell its new Game Buddy(TM) Power pack. The unit is a portable plug-in rechargeable RAM(TM) battery pack for Nintendo's(R) Game Boy(R) pocket, that triples the use time of Game Boy to 22 hours of non-stop use. Total available hours of use with the pack exceeds 300, replacing at least 75 disposable batteries for significant cost savings to the consumer. As well, the unit has a luminescent glowing charge light that functions as a night-light when plugged-in. Product will be in stores for Christmas.

"Nintendo has sold in excess of 30 million Game Boy pocket units, and there has been a resurgence of late with the introduction of the Digital Camera software and printer. "We are very confident that the Game Buddy(TM) Power pack will be a great success, given the increasing need for economical portable energy in the fast growing video game market" said J. Bruce Pope, President and CEO of BTI. The portable video game market is a multi-billion dollar global industry and Nintendo, Sony and Sega are all competing aggressively for market share with new innovative applications.

"Genesis" is an electronic and game manufacturers' agent with an

infrastructure and network of sales managers across the US. The principals at Genesis have been instrumental in the introduction of numerous Video game and Consumer electronics lines, such as Atari, Sega, Acclaim, EIDOS, T HQ, NAMCO, Sanyo, Toshiba and Yes Entertainment. Mr. Mike Lee, President of "Genesis" said, "The Game Buddy(TM) Power pack is a super unit that not only looks great, but satisfies a real need for more play time at reduced cost. The Game Buddy(TM) Power pack gives you hours of use; you can drive from Chicago to Florida without changing batteries, then, just plug it in to recharge, it's that simple."

Hasbro Buys PC Game Publisher MicroProse

Pawtucket, R.I.-Aug. 12-FWN/UPI--HASBRO INC. SAID TODAY it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire MicroProse Inc., a publisher of popular simulation, 3-D action and strategy games for the personal computer (PC), in a deal valued at approximately \$70 million, including assumed debt and redeemable preferred stock.

Hasbro said its wholly owned subsidiary will begin a tender offer no later than Aug. 18 for all of MicroProse's outstanding common shares.

The offer will be conditioned upon, among other things, the expiration or earlier termination of the applicable waiting period under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvement Act of 1976 and the tender of a majority of the common shares outstanding on a fully diluted basis of MicroProse.

Following completion of the offer, Hasbro's subsidiary will be merged with MicroProse and any remaining MicroProse common shares will be converted into the right to receive \$6 a share in cash.

Hasbro will combine the activities of MicroProse with Hasbro Interactive, its entertainment software publishing arm.

GT Invests in Blizzard Fugitives

Aug. 21, 1998 (MULTIMEDIA WIRE, Vol. 5, No. 162 via COMTEX) -- Recently departed development talent from Blizzard Entertainment and a former GT Interactive [GTIS] staffer formed a new development house, Fugitive Studios, which turned down an offer from Sega and signed with GT.

GT said yesterday it obtains exclusive worldwide publishing rights to Fugitive's PC and console titles in addition to print and merchandising rights.

Blizzard is not likely to be badly hurt by the defections since its developer ranks remain robust.

While the vast majority of Fugitive's development talent had their hands in Starcraft, Warcraft II and Diablo - PC titles - Fugitive co-founder/CEO Greg Williams says "we will definitely" develop console titles. In talking to Sega, Fugitive learned a lot about Dreamcast technology. And depending on the timing of PlayStation II's release, both PSX and PSXII are also attractive platforms, he adds, citing PSX's large installed base.

Fugitive's first title, a 3D action game with RPG elements, is expected late next year for PC. The studio may port it to Dreamcast or PSX. Meanwhile, Williams -- a former director of product development at GT -- plans to add a few staffers before the game is complete and expects to take on a second development project within six or seven months.

Quelling speculation to the contrary, Williams says the guys from Blizzard left on good terms and simply pursued an opportunity.

NYKO Technologies Launches Classic Game ...

LAS VEGAS (Aug. 19) ENTERTAINMENT WIRE - NYKO Technologies Inc., a leading video accessories company based in Los Angeles, came to Las Vegas recently to pay homage to the classic games that built the foundation for today's gaming industry, as well as to launch its newest products for demanding video game players.

On the eve of the Classic Video Game & Computer Show in Las Vegas, the company launched what it calls "Today's Technology for Yesterday's Classics," exciting new additions to its well-known line of controllers and other peripherals designed for avid gamers.

NYKO recently announced that it has been licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment to produce gamepads, joysticks and other popular items for its PlayStation game console.

Since the Sony PlayStation platform will be supporting the introduction of new versions of the old classic games this fall, such as Hasbro's Centipede and Westwood's Command & Conquer, NYKO selected the Expo to debut its new Classic TrackBall, as well as the Scorpion Dual Shock Controller, to honor these titles.

The oversized, high-density Classic TrackBall brings back that classic, smooth arcade quality and feel to gameplay, explained Robert Rienick, newly-appointed vice president, sales & marketing, for NYKO. Designed for all Mouse-compatible games, the NYKO Classic TrackBall offers a Turbo Fire feature.

The debut marks the launch of the first official accessory designed specifically for these new classic game titles. To add to the TrackBall's authenticity, the design is formed from the original molds of the first Atari TrackBall, which NYKO has obtained for its use in the product's manufacture.

Confirmed Games Compatible with NYKO Classic TrackBall for Sony PlayStation

| TITLE | BY |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Broken Sword | THQ |
| Command & Conquer | Westwood Studios |
| Retaliation | Westwood Studios |
| Red Alert | Westwood Studios |
| Centipede | Hasbro |
| Monopoly | Hasbro |
| Atari's Greatest Hits | Midway |
| DiscWorld II | Psygnosis |

Elemental Gear Bolt
Clock Tower II

Working Designs
ASCII Entertainment

While taking care of the classics with the Classic TrackBall, NYKO is offering its new Scorpion controller to address a much newer trend, "Force Feedback."

With a high-tech, ergonomic shape, the Scorpion features a built-in Force Feedback (dual shock adapter) and Dual Analog controls for use with compatible software. The controller may be switched to analog or digital play mode, and features Independent Turbo button functions as well as allowing game play in slow motion.

Last, the company showed its SuperCobra advanced dual-system Light Gun, compatible with all light gun games including Namco's Gun Con mode. It features Force Feedback, Auto Bullet Reload and Adjustable Auto Fire. The SuperCobra gun is compatible with Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn consoles.

"It is exciting to note that today we may be creating tomorrow's classics in our industry," Rienick added. "New trends like Force Feedback will be part of a gamer's repertoire for years to come."

For further information, contact David Naghi, NYKO Technologies, 888/444-NYKO or go to the NYKO Web site directly, at <http://www.nyko.com>.

Xena: Warrior Princess Makes Her Polygonal Debut

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (Aug. 21) ENTERTAINMENT WIRE - Aug. 21, 1998 - 989 Studios, a Sony Computer Entertainment Group Company, announced today that it is publishing the upcoming title Xena: Warrior Princess(TM).

The millions of fans of the hit TV series "Xena: Warrior Princess" will now have a chance to enjoy the hard-hitting action only Xena can deliver, exclusively on the PlayStation(R) game console. Available in March 1999, Xena: Warrior Princess couples the intrigue of an adventure game with the non-stop action of a fighting game.

Bringing to life the humorous and entertaining storyline of the television series, the videogame version of Xena: Warrior Princess features characters and locations taken directly from the TV show, as well as an ensemble of newly created villains and dynamic new worlds to explore.

"We're very excited to be a part of the worldwide phenomenon of Xena," said Jeffrey Fox, vice president, marketing, 989 Studios. "By creating a compelling videogame based on the characters and storyline from the number-one internationally syndicated television show, we're confident we'll deliver a game that will appeal to millions of Xena fans."

Gamers will enjoy the dramatic ancient adventure as Xena fights her way through immersive 3D game environments including Valarian's Castle, Hades' Underworld and the Temple of the Pinnacles. On the treacherous quest, gameplayers will confront vicious villains, gorgons, cyclops and Dyzan the fire-breathing gatekeeper of Hades.

In the game, Xena embarks on an epic adventure to stop the Minotaur King and Amazon Queen's diabolical plot to kidnap Xena's friend Gabrielle and

deliver her for sacrifice to an evil sorceress. Xena must defeat monsters, ogres and the minions of Hades before confronting the ultimate master of black magic.

Xena: Warrior Princess features unparalleled 3D technology that provides advanced light sourcing and textured polygons that render at 30 frames per second. Dynamic gameplay, fluid animation and vivid graphic realism also heightens the intensity of the fast-playing action.

Xena: Warrior Princess Key Features

- Characters and locations taken directly from the top rated, internationally syndicated TV show
- Arsenal of weapons: swords, staffs, hidden weapons and the Chakram -- Xena's trademark weapon
- Fast-action gameplay that runs at 30 frames per second
- Multiple dynamic light sources
- Eight game environments each with multiple missions

THQ To Publish PlayStation Game Based On Hit Comic, 'Danger Girl'

CALABASAS, CALIF. (Aug. 25) BUSINESS WIRE - Aug. 25, 1998 - THQ Inc. Tuesday announced that it will publish and distribute a PlayStation adventure game based on characters from the new hit comic, "Danger Girl," created by J. Scott Campbell and published monthly under Image Comics' Cliffhanger label.

Interactive game developer n-Space will design and develop the game, scheduled for worldwide release by THQ in the fourth quarter of 1999. Demonstrating the comic book's popularity, New Line Cinema recently optioned live-action film rights.

The third-person action adventure game will revolve around the bold exploits of an elite team of sexy, smart and sassy women recruited by the top-secret Danger Girl spy agency and charged with fighting evil. Featuring multiple characters, each with unique skills, "Danger Girl" imperils its beautiful and curvaceous heroines in seemingly hopeless situations against menacing villains as they use their wit and charm to fight for the forces of good.

"'Danger Girl' is a fantastic opportunity to leverage a hot comic book property, a talented developer like n-Space, and THQ's strength as a worldwide publisher," said Steve Ryno, vice president of development, THQ. "THQ continually seeks out original, cutting-edge material to further expand our product line and 'Danger Girl' certainly fits that bill."

"We are thrilled to be joining with THQ in this unique venture," said Erick Dyke, president, n-Space Inc. "Because of our relationship with J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell, who are participating as team members on the project, and THQ's proven expertise, we are confident that we can provide a gaming experience to rival all other action adventures -- and give J. Scott Campbell's women the curves they deserve!"

"Andy and I are both quite eager to get this project underway," said Campbell, co-creator of "Danger Girl." "When we entered into this arrangement with n-Space, we knew we'd get a team that would create the definitive 'Danger Girl' experience. When they signed with THQ, we knew the product would go to market in style."

Based in Orlando, Fla., n-Space is a leading developer of entertainment software for Windows 95 and console systems such as Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64. Established in 1994, n-Space creates compelling, state-of-the-art games with cutting-edge 3-D technology and vivid, inspiring imagery. n-Space is represented by Interactive Studio Management LLC.

Midway Ships GEX64: Enter the Gecko for Nintendo-R 64

CORSICANA, TEXAS (Aug. 27) BUSINESS WIRE - August 27, 1998 - Hot on the Tail of the Successful PlayStation(R) Game Console Version

GEX, the TV-addicted, wise-cracking gecko that has been entertaining PlayStation gamers nationwide with his irreverent personality, sarcastic wit and natural wall-climbing ability, leaps for the first time onto Nintendo(R) 64. Midway Home Entertainment, publisher of several of the video game market's most innovative titles, today announced that GEX64: Enter the Gecko for the Nintendo 64 is shipping to retail outlets nationwide. Midway has reported that initial shipments are greater than originally projected.

Players take on the role of GEX, a TV-addicted gecko recruited by secret government agents to rid the world of Rez, GEX's arch enemy who is attempting to take over the country's television broadcasts. The journey leads players through 24 beautifully textured 3D worlds, each designed as sarcastic parodies of movies and TV. Comedian Dana Gould provides the voice of GEX with tons of wise cracks, sarcastic one-liners and celebrity impressions.

"We are pleased to expand the GEX audience to Nintendo 64 gamers and take full advantage of its outstanding graphic capabilities," said Paula Cook, director of marketing at Midway Home Entertainment. "GEX64: Enter the Gecko is a great game for the whole family because it taps into America's fascination with movie and TV nostalgia and packs in outrageous adventures with a great sense of humor."

GEX lampoons pop culture and the American media in such graphically superior worlds as the Pre-History Channel, where GEX encounters dinosaurs and reptiles; Scream TV, paying homage to all of GEX's favorite slasher TV shows and movies and The Rocket Channel, a tribute to the sci-fi shows that abducted countless hours of his childhood. Other areas include Toon TV, Kung-Fu Theater, and Rezopolis.

In addition to stunning new graphics, the Nintendo 64 version of GEX features an all-new exclusive water-based level. In this waterlogged level, GEX can swim around and explore famous sunken ships of the past while avoiding killer sharks and other dangers of the sea. GEX must maneuver his way through a famous overturned ship, making his way to the mast's crow's nest to escape.

GEX has the ability to scale walls and ceilings as well as battle his

enemies with special moves including tail whips, flying karate kicks, and grabbing items with his tongue. As a secret agent and master of disguise, GEX dons disguises and transforms himself into a caveman, karate fighter, astronaut and even a duck.

>Gaming Online STR InfoFile - Online Users Growl & Purr!

- Keynote -
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(Revised 08/26/98)

Always Check the Mirror
Before You Start the Car
Keynote speech by Donald A. Thomas Jr.
August 22, 1998 - 10:30 a.m.
World of Atari '98 - Las Vegas, Nevada
c 1998 may be reprinted in entirety and with byline

It was about six weeks ago or so that my family hopped a plane from the Sacramento to San Diego for a couple of days. It was a trip we had promised our son for years. -- Actually for about three years now. -- At twelve, Kyle, was very much into skateboarding and inline skating. When we finally connected cable television to the house, it seemed whenever Kyle was not outside our house devising new tricks with his skateboard, he was inside watching the pro-skaters compete in ESPN2 X-treme game competitions.

I don't know if you have watched a lot of the X-treme games like my son has, but Kyle has learned two major lessons in life by watching professional skateboard competitions. First, there are desirable careers to be had in that sport. Secondly, all the nation's skateboard pros live in San Diego, California. Hence, he has had an eager desire to visit that city. Kyle just knew that professional skaters were all over the streets in San Diego and he just had to see and mingle with them.

So now Kyle is fifteen. He is in his early years of high school and a trip to San Diego is an opportunity to tour San Diego State University, a renowned venue for a respectable college education. Of course, now, Kyle isn't into skateboarding any more; it's definitely BMX trick cycling.

We hit San Diego during a very warm, but still pleasant weekend. We visited the Zoo on a Sunday and toured the SDSU campus on the Monday before flying back home. On the evening of that Sunday, we were touring the area in our rental car and comparing differences between San Diego and the San Francisco Bay Area. At some point, Kyle told Lynn and me, "One thing is for sure; There aren't all the professional skaters on every street corner like I thought there would be!"

How nice it was to see my son mature and get a better grasp of what the world is really like. Just as I was about to congratulate him on his astute observation, he added, "They must all be on tour."

I guess he still has a little more maturing yet. <q>

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Good morning. My name is Don Thomas. I worked at Tramiel's Atari between November 1989 through August 1996. Many Atari users once knew me as a spokesperson for Atari offering feedback and support on CompuServe and the Genie online services. I have been an Atari computer user and game player since the early eighties and founded a small software publishing company I called Artisan Software in the late eighties. I have been profiled in publications such as Start Magazine and have had my articles printed in many prominent trade journals and throughout the Internet over the years. I currently work in the video game industry and am responsible for the Web Domain of "I.C.When.COM". "I.C. When" is a comprehensive chronological history of video games and home computers.

In a few minutes I will offer an opportunity to answer questions you may have about me, my experiences at Atari or in the industry. But first, I'd like to share some thoughts I have with regard to the impact classic gaming and computing SHOULD have on us all . . . particularly the decision makers and the trend setters.

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So, my son, Kyle, is convinced that he understands the skateboard industry. He'll be the first to admit that he doesn't know everything, but that is not really the point. The point is more related to the integrity of the information he does know. For instance, he is convinced that skateboarders and BMX riders and inline skaters can earn a respectable living by touring the country and winning competitions. "All it takes is finding the right sponsors," he says.

In most respects, Kyle is simply wrong and he is in for an awakening when he learns that life is most probably going to be made up of flipping hamburgers, going to school and landing a series of traditional jobs throughout his career. On the other hand, Kyle may very well become the Ralph Baer or Nolan Bushnell in some aspect of the X-Games industry. His determination may well persevere and he could be in the right place at the right time as the world adopts a new billion-dollar devotion to world league network of skateboard teams and competitions. If Nolan had listened to his critics, then he may well be an unknown engineer at Lockheed and the world may have never known the same "Pong" that we now know.

But, while we popularize the stories that beat the odds, we often forget to check the mirror in life and see all the mistakes to avoid new

failures. The gambles that lost. The bets that may have won if the gamblers looked at all the angles and examined all the risks before starting the machine that failed so unceremoniously.

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Now, let's fast-forward away from Baer's Odyssey and Bushnell's "Pong" to a world of PlayStation, Dreamcast, N64 and Color Game Boy. Dare I forget to mention Project X? I think we can all agree that the video game industry has changed in a quarter century. Companies make systems that are MIPS ahead of a time that power was evaluated by how many sprites and colors could be on a screen simultaneously. Technology includes terms related to texture mapping and full motion video instead of bank switching and vertical blanks. Gaming magazines tend to allocate more space to well endowed polygons named Lara. Publishers select games that spatter oceans

of blood-red pixels across the screen and replay digitized screams of real-time animated monsters being ripped apart to terrorize more than just our imaginations.

This weekend's World of Atari '98 show is indicative of an old trend that is re-emerging. It is one that explores the value of updating and republishing classic video games. Most recent examples include Activision's libraries of Atari 2600 and Commodore 64 compilations for the PC, Hasbro's release of "Frogger", Namco's series of "Namco Museum" titles for PlayStation, other releases such as "Centipede", "Asteroids" and so many more. I think it is exciting that companies are

putting back in to my hands easy access to the games we loved playing so fondly in years gone by.

In my opinion, this trend is not a step backward by any stretch of the imagination and I feel it has been way too slow in coming. I believe that the video game industry has successfully established a new market of game players in the last decade. By doing so, they have abandoned the original phenomenon that built the industry twenty years ago and, thus they have abandoned those who loved it so. I guess it could be similar as if the music industry gave up on classical, swing, blues or jazz just because most of the world seems to appreciate some form of rock.

So what is it exactly that built the industry? What is this phenomenon that differentiates the games of the nineties from those introduced in the seventies and eighties?

Many of us at Atari had a name for the formula that makes classic games so great. I don't know if anyone else ever tried to define it like I have, but it is three simple words: "The. Fun. Factor.".

I define the fun factor as a phenomenon that includes five primary components: I can remember them more easily because the parts spell out the word PRESS as in "Press the Fire Button".

1. high score Potential
2. Repetition
3. Ease of learning
4. Strategy
5. Secrets

All games, past and present, have to have some mixture of these components to survive very long on the marketplace. But only the original classic games consistently maintain a balance of all of them.

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Let's look at them quickly. First, I mentioned "high score Potential". (I am cheating a little bit to steal the P from potential to make the anagram, but it is a very serious component.)

You might remember "Pong" had scoring. It had to. It was the only measure of how one did when playing the game. A higher score than your opponent meant that you won the game. A higher score than the computer player meant that you beat the game. But, by today's standard, the scores were awfully unimpressive. A good game might conclude with a score of 11, maybe 15 depending on the version of "Pong" being played.

Then there were games like "Warlords", "Breakout" and "Missile Command".

Suddenly games allowed players to score as high into the hundreds, maybe thousands. Then along came "Galaxian" and "Phoenix" which doused players with scores in the tens and hundreds of thousands.

Eventually, next generation games took over and high scores have been fading fast. Games are too complicated to score anymore. Racing games give lap times. R.P.G.'s reward players with new levels and fulfilled objectives. Arcades no longer publish player high scores over each machine and we never hear about a game that revealed something unusual simply because a determined player hit a new high score.

There is an article I found in the most recent September 1998 issue of Next Generation magazine. The article starts on page 10 and is titled: "When was the last time you scored?" The piece concludes and I quote, "Will score ever come back? Probably not. As technology evolves, games will become even more complex, and current titles that still employ a high score, such as 'N20', 'Einhander', and 'Incoming', are in an ever-smaller minority."

The article sheds some rays of hope however and I quote further, "But classic games are making something of a comeback; titles like 'Centipede' and 'Asteroids' are being retrofitted for the 90's, with score intact."

Sadly the author concludes, "Still, it's safe to say that score will never play the pivotal role it once did in gaming history."

If nothing else, I am not the only one that believes that high score potential is an elementary difference between games of today and yesterday.

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Let's look at the second element of the fun factor: Repetition.

When I say Repetition, I am describing the ability to identify a way that a game is played within the first few seconds of pressing the start button and depend on that overall premise to stay the same throughout the game. "Pitfall" is a game that includes climbing, swinging and jumping in a horizontal scrolling format. The obstacles may change their positions, the ladders may not always be on the left or on the right, but the game never ends up being different than how it started. Each new wave, each new level predictably resembles the one prior.

Someone might say, ah, but "Gorf" deviated from that formula and "Donkey Kong" had a series of different virtual game venues that had a lot of changes from one level to the next. Well, not really. It may have taken more than a few seconds to learn the new looks of each level,

but they eventually recycled and the series of levels fit the definition of repetition that I am describing here.

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Okay, let's look at ease of learning; the E in the anagram that defines the fun factor.

Many people tell me that ease of learning is not at all missing from games today. They bring up games like "Unreal", "Gran Turismo" or "Crash Bandicoot". Yes, those are relatively easy games to learn, but are still far more complex than walking up to a machine, dropping a quarter and

driving a circle through a maze to eat dots and avoid ghosts. I've played "Unreal". It's fun, but there are a lot complexities too. A lot of passages to discover. A lot of items to recover. A very difficult game to sit down and compete against your previous high score.

I have played "Gran Turismo". It is undeniably a phenomenal racing game. Of course I have to be concerned with a lot more than I did when I played "Night Driver" or even "Pole Position". There's tire tread, engine capabilities, car handling. Not much instant plug-and-play here.

I have enjoyed many hours of "Crash Bandicoot" and "Crash Bandicoot 2". I know I will rush out and buy "Crash Bandicoot 3". But it is more complex of a game to learn and accomplish than "Space Invaders" or "Missile Command".

Games from yesteryear, games that were filled with the fun factor, were never hard to learn. Often hard to master, but never hard to learn.

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All games require the gamer to learn and apply a strategy to master the gameplay. Whether it is "Checkers" or "Othello", "Boxing" or "Street Fighter", there are one or more strategic moves that enable competitors to score better with experience.

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Finally, the fun factor is unleashed in any specific game when there are secrets in or about the game to be discovered. A secret may be a hidden level or character. Maybe it is a code to add lives or weapons. Maybe it is a way to see the programmer's initials such in Atari's "Adventure" or "Yar's Revenge". Or, perhaps it is a fascinating story on how the game was developed or marketed.

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So why does an understanding of the fun factor and the appealing aspects of video games from yesterday have significance to you and me today?

Because we are approaching a new fork in the road. An opportunity to go in new directions. New generations of video game systems such as Dreamcast and Project X as well as whatever competing products designed to knock the socks off of the mass market. And before we embark on a journey to new next-next-generation technology, let's check the rear view mirror. Let us begin to recognize the market that wants to play classic favorites or new games that instill the fun factor into them. Let's put high score back into the game.

I applaud what companies such as Hasbro for what they appear to be doing. Their focus on reintroducing some of the world's greatest software titles on up-to-date platforms is cutting edge. Hasbro has tasted the success with "Frogger" selling over a million copies in less than six months since its launch last November. "Centipede" will undoubtedly do similarly as well. I believe that they will do equally as well with each new title as long as they look back and enhance them using the same formula that made them great in the first place.

Thankfully, companies like Hasbro and Activision and Namco and Nyko are beginning to adjust the mirror before moving forward in new projects. They may not always make the greatest decisions based on what they have

seen behind them, but they are pulling out into the proverbial traffic of progress while being more informed.

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I'd like to suggest to forward thinking companies in this business two things: It's wise to check the mirror and apply the good things from the past into the things they do in our future. And, secondly, it would be smart to look for more ways to work together; to solidify a plan to help legitimize the gaming industry completely. Let's find more opportunities to recognize all the better games and to put the people who create them in the spotlight.

END

- The AfterMath -
by Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
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(Revised 08/26/98)

(WINDOW DRESSING: Mr. Mark Santora is producing a quality video documentary of WOA '98. For information and ordering, visit, Mark's homepage at: <http://home.earthlink.net/~santora.>)

Suddenly, a Vegas weekend has passed me by and I find myself on a plane chasing a Sunday sunset toward the western horizon. The first annual Classic Video Game and Home Computer Show, otherwise touted as World of Atari '98, had come to a close. The people and the memories have bid me a fond farewell. While mere hours before I was saturated in a sea of camaraderie I now find myself heading home in an airship of anonymity. I did not win the "Asteroids" cocktail table raffled by Mr. Tim Arnold to benefit the Las Vegas Salvation Army, but I did carry with me a few small boxes of memorabilia that I consider just as priceless. And I carry a camcorder crammed with a few hours of video. And I carry a few chocolates for my wife and son as they stay up at home to ask me if I had a nice time.

I now feel inspired to share, with those who honored us by attending and for those who so desperately wanted to go, a report of the show from my unique perspective. It was an interesting change of pace for me. After so many years of attending Comdex, CES, E3 and a number of Atari-specific shows over the years as one of the crew, I am suddenly bestowed the title of Distinguished Guest. This time, I am not responsible to help set up walls of a booth, components of a kiosk or crates of literature. Instead, I am invited to verbalize my experiences at Atari, shake friends of old and new and sign an occasional request for an autograph.

Mr. Keita Iida and Mr. Don Rogers greeted me at McCarran International Airport around noon on Friday, August 21, 1998. Both gentlemen were anxious to help carry my bags. In spite of my insistence to carry them myself, Keita managed to grab one away as I put one down to switch hands. They took me to the Holiday Inn Boardwalk Hotel and Casino (<http://www.hiboardwalk.com>) located right on the world famous Vegas strip. The hotel required me to wait a couple hours to register so we checked my bags and a group of us drove over to TGI Friday's (<http://www.tgifridays.com>) for lunch.

In the earliest hours of my arrival I met all the core promoters. Mr. Rich Tsukiji has one of those last names that I can spell, but just cannot learn to pronounce. I feel redeemed, however, since I later learned he once misspelled my last name in the official program. Payback maybe? <g> In reality I have always known Rich as Rich and he has always known me as Don. We have always been on a first name basis from the first time we met. In fact, those years go back almost a decade when World of Atari was held at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California. It was at that show that Rich helped me to introduce Artisan Software in its first ever public exhibition. Rich filled the role of producer at WOA '98. The event is ultimately to his credit just like we owe him for the experiences at so many Atari-specific events over the years. It was good to see Rich again and to meet Rich Tsukiji II, the proud offspring of his father.

Mr. John Hardie was rubbing his tired eyes but still found plenty of energy to smile and welcome the guests as they arrived. John and Keita co-produce the Atari Headquarters web domain (<http://www.atarihq.com>). The two gentlemen actually coordinated most of the events at the show, helped solicit sponsors and arrange keynotes. By this time on Friday they have already spent a great deal of time keeping promises and schedules on track. Before it would be over, they would see it get much worse before it would get better.

Mr. Brad Kota, was an inspiration for this year's show. As a long time friend and colleague of Mr. Tsukiji, Brad helped to persuade him that there would be interest in a classic video game show. Brad's Best Electronics has always been a formidable icon in the industry with the world's most unique selection of hard-to-find components and parts for Atari video games and computers.

I soon caught up with Mr. Randy Stoller, a memorable young man who has a rare collection of classic game and computer products. Mr. Jerry Jessop worked at Atari in the late seventies and early eighties. Jerry did a variety of engineering projects at Atari. Mr. Dan Kramer is renowned for his work on the track ball at Atari in the early years. Mr. Leonard Herman, author of "Pheonix: The Fall and Rise of Videogames" and the "ABC to the VCS" (Rolenta Press, <http://www.atarihq.com/features/phoenix.html>), was setting up to offer autographed copies of his books. Mr. Sean Kelly, of Digital Press, set up next to Leonard to offer his Classic Videogame Commercial Archive on VHS tapes (<http://www.xnet.com/~skelly/video.htm>). Amidst all the hustle and bustle, mammoth crates were moved carefully into the vender area. Each one was marked "Atari Historical Society" (<http://www.atari.nu>) and followed closely by a Mr. Curt Vendel.

By 3 p.m. on Friday, the show appeared to be coming together quite well. (I was happy. I finally received my key to room number 463.) Anyone in the know, however, knew things were not going as well as hoped. There were problems. Throughout the afternoon, Rich Tsukiji had to run around Las Vegas city offices to accommodate a variety of exhibition permits that had previously not been required. WOA '98 was becoming a much bigger show than some people had anticipated and an entirely new plateau of permits and licenses were suddenly required. With a lot of hot Vegas sweat and a heavy dose of Tsukiji finesse, Rich pulled everything together just as the city was locking the business office doors closed for the weekend.

Meanwhile, back at the not-so-okay coral, Keita sat next to a pair of gold plated pay phones in the foyer of the convention floor. He had long run out of quarters to feed the phones and was now typing out the same numbers into his cellular phone that Don Rogers pointed out in a thick edition of

the Las Vegas yellow pages. The mission: get between six to eight 19-inch color televisions to the show at a reasonable price before the rental stores closed and WOA '98 commenced. The long awaited "Battlesphere" tournaments must go on, but no televisions had shown up as originally planned.

Ultimately, Keita and Rich resolved their emergencies to everyone's satisfaction, but the energy was building and the pressure was mounting. Mr. Bruce Carso and his wife and family arrived with their 15-foot box truck direct from B&C ComputerVisions (<http://www.myatari.com>). Mr. Tim Arnold had his classic coin-ops to unload. Mr. Jerry Jessop and Mr. Dan Kramer had a large rental van full of artifacts for the Classic Game Museum. Artifacts that included the very first "Computer Space" ever manufactured and an original coin-op "Pong". Mr. Steve Kipker and his crew from Steve's Software (<http://www.atarionline.com>) set up countless boxes of computer and gaming software featuring notable mentions such as "Air Cars" (\$75) for the Atari Jaguar and "Visicalc" (\$1) for Atari computers. All new in originally shrink-wrapped packaging of course.

Keita and John would not get much sleep again this long and anxious day. Even at late night hours, they had yet to set up their own contributions to the museum that required a painstaking system to catalog and arrange all of the displays and exhibits. Much of this time I didn't feel right just standing around. Everyone was working so hard. I did my best to document the course of events with my camcorder, but I did set it aside for a while to help Bruce and Cathy unload their truck.

At 6:30 p.m., the doors opened across the hall of the main convention hall to the formal reception area. Persons connected directly to the production of the show took a well-deserved break and pre-ticketed attendees were all invited. There were two cash bars, a great sound system playing the soundtrack from "Tempest 2000" and wall-to-wall people. Rich asked me to make a few opening remarks. People who know me do not think I am much capable of making just a few remarks, but I managed to prove them wrong this time around. I thanked Rich, Brad, John and Keita. I urged others to find them and thank them all as well. Rich asked me to tell them how to get their programs for the show and I closed with a formal welcome to each and everyone in attendance.

Not too long after the reception, activities began to settle down to a realistic pace. Most of the venders had found time to sigh and only John and Keita were still in a mode that some say resembles panic. In spite of it all, Rich, John, Keita and a few others including myself broke away to get some dinner at Applebee's Neighborhood Grille and Bar (<http://www.applebees.com>). I am familiar with the Applebee's chain, but I have no idea where Keita took us that night to get there. The trip allowed me to renew a friendship with Rich and we filled in a lot of blanks for a number of old Atari anecdotes from days gone by.

Immediately after dinner, we returned to the Boardwalk and Rich, Keita and John returned to work as if they had never yet started. The appeal of the slot machines overcame me and I began to throw money away into as many of them as I could. Ouch. By around 2:30 a.m. I returned to room 463 and reread my keynote speech one more time. Well, two more times. Hmm, a few typos. Maybe it turned out being several times before I actually turned out the lights around 4 a.m.

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Lynn, my wife, refused to bear the Las Vegas heat with me. She knew I

would be pre-occupied and decided playing mom was almost important role at home. As always, she turned out being the wise woman I know and adore. Saturday was hot long before anyone had a chance to complain about it. Staying at the same hotel as the show was wonderful and the uncomfortable heat was felt only near the windows. I arose at 8:40 a.m.

By 10 o'clock I walked past a long, long line of attendees who clearly wanted the doors to open sooner rather than later. At approximately, 10:07 a.m. the doors pushed back the crowd as they opened and the crowd calmly funneled themselves into the exhibition floor.

I took a lot of videotape and will need to dedicate a day to review it all. But from recollection, there were items for sale and items for display. There were displays for display and displays for sale. There were mint condition Ms. Pac-Man dolls offered by Jack Berg Sales Company, a firm based in El Paso, Texas. There were hard-to-find coin-op art panels available from the Atari Historical Society. There were mint copies of "Metorite" (\$75) for the Atari 5200 game system offered by Atari Headquarters. Mr. David Naghi and Mr. Robert Rienick introduce Nyko Technologies' (<http://www.nyko.com>) new Classic Track Ball for the PlayStation (<http://www.playstation.com>) game console.

In a center aisle, Tim Arnold kept track of the raffle total with a makeshift tally redesigned from an old pinball game. Each of his targeted \$1,500 rung out with a loud bell and Tim would make hourly announcements of small prize winners using a handheld megaphone.

At 10:30 a.m., I entered the keynote hall (a.k.a. the reception area from the night before). There was a small number of people there awaiting my arrival for my keynote. "Phew", I thought to myself as I knew speaking to just a few people would be a stress-less task. At that moment, Keita Iida saw I was ready and ran across the hall to announce my speech. In an instant, the crowd from the vendors area swarmed to the keynote area and left only the rearmost group of chairs unclaimed.

I enjoy speaking. I have performed in some amateur theater in my younger days and I know no shame to admit that I enjoy a little notoriety from time to time. This was different. People were seated before me truly interested in what I was about to say. Was my talk too short? Would it be too long? Would it be meaningful or sound like rambling? I decided the best thing to do was do it. I had 19 (very small) pages of script and I tried hard to refer to it as little as possible while looking at my audience as much as possible. It must have not been too bad. People asked a number of great questions after the talk and followed me into the corridor to ask more. One very attractive young lady wanted to know if I was the founder of Atari. I said "no".

Now that my keynote was over, the pressure of the weekend had been lifted from my shoulders and I was free to do nothing more except enjoy the show. And I did. Big time. I met with Mr. Rob Fulop, designer of "Demon Attack" for the Atari 2600. I saw the rare Cosmos, the holographic game system, designed by Atari before Mr. Jack Tramiel sold holograph technology to American Banknote (<http://www.abnh.com>). I saw rare prototypes such as "Dukes of Hazard" for the Atari 2600. I saw an early mold of the Atari Portfolio computer. I saw mint condition still-packaged Colecovision carts. There were photocopies of rare internal Atari documents. One collector showed me an entire box of badges for Atari employees from many, many years ago. At 5 p.m., the exhibit hall for the first day came to a close, but a swap meet commenced in the keynote area that lasted a couple hours.

That evening, I met David Naghi and Robert Rienick in the hotel lobby at 7 p.m. Robert's wife, Betty, also caught up with us and the trio escorted me to Gordon Biersch (<http://www.gordonbiersch.com>) for dinner. David and Robert shared a number of great things they have planned for their product lines. Meanwhile I enjoyed a tremendous garlic-rubbed hanger steak and an unusually decadent slice of cheesecake.

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There was no rush for me to get up terribly early on Sunday. I wanted to be there when the doors opened at 10 a.m. and I was. My new camcorder also takes digital stills and I exploited some of the pre-show inactivity to take pictures of the coin-ops scattered throughout the hall. When the doors opened, a steady stream of aficionados came and left throughout the day.

On this day, I had a greater opportunity to sit in on some of the other keynotes. First, was a presentation from Dan Kramer and Jerry Jessop. They told a number of stories from their days at Atari as renegade engineers. If the audience was not spellbound, they were laughing at an intentional quip or waving their hands to ask a new question. Also this day, I sat in on a talk by Mr. Bill Kunkel, co-founder of Electronic Games Magazine. Bill spoke of the early trade shows and the horrific videogame industry crash that tore many of the companies apart. Dave Staugas was WOA '98's surprise speaker during mid-afternoon. Dave spoke how he survived the Tramiel taeokver and created a number of games and applications for Atari over the years. The keynotes, as well as the other events at World of Atari '98 are being documented by Mr. Mark Santora's video. For information on ordering this video visit <http://home.earthlink.net/~santora>.

In late afternoon, I introduced myself to Mr. Derek Mihocka of Gemulators Inc. (<http://www.emulators.com>) who was demonstrating Gemulator '98. This incredible device allows Atari ST, STe and TT software or Apple Macintosh, Mac SE or Mac II software to run at lightning speeds in a Windows environment for prices way under \$200.

Also intriguing at the show was the new Lynx TV converter by Wizztronics (<http://www.wizztronics.com>) shown by founder, Mr. Steve Cohen. The device enables users to play Atari handheld Lynx games directly on a standard television; even a big screen! The resolution looked fantastic and the picture was incredibly stable. For under \$150 users can finally see and play Lynx games on a full size screen.

Nearing the end of the day, the Auction was held and nearly one hundred items were put up for bid. Mr. Alan Miller, certified, licensed and bonded auctioneer, U.S.A. Auctions, conducted the auction. A number of one-of-a-kind and unusual artifacts and products were shown and blocked. Rich Tsukiji whispered to me that this was undoubtedly the world's first professional auction of Atari products.

Around 4 p.m., Tim Arnold picked the last few winners of the raffle. (Darn, I did not win the "Asteroids" game.) Activities in the main hall had died down and vendors had already begun to pack things up. In the far corner, Jerry Jessop and friends were doing their best to sell off items still on the table. I wanted to spend some time filming the "Battlesphere" tournament, but it was always so crowded in that corner of the hall. Mr. Scott Le Grand and Ms. Stephanie Wukovitz of 4Play (<http://www.best.com/~sebab/dvidgames/dsphere/sphere.shtml>) had the crowd

captive, but by the time I got back over to there following the auction, the winner was declared and gone.

~~~~~ There is no way to explain the pleasures that come to us at events such as these. Those of us in the industry love it. We remember unpacking trainloads of boxes and crates for the Winter or Summer Consumer Electronics Shows or a Comdex. We remember working late at night wondering all the while if the booth would be completed by the time the show started. We remember gathering late at night to fulfill traditions at a local pub or restaurant. We remember new product launches and all those times that something was supposed to work and didn't. World of Atari '98 serves as a forum for us to recall those memories and to relive them through the stories we tell.

For those who love the industry, but are not employed as a part of it, I know it is equally fun to be a part of WOA '98. I know because I am uniquely a part of that crowd too. I got into the business as a happenstance and as an outsider who swore to myself that I would never forget how it felt to press my nose against the glass looking in. I don't believe I have ever failed that personal promise. Some said at WOA '98 that I started a trend to get the programs autographed. I managed to get almost everyone although I missed a few. There was Rob Fulop who I did miss in spite of intentions otherwise, but I did get Mr. Michael Mika of Next Generation Magazine (<http://www.next-generation.com>). I missed Marshall Rosenthal of the LA Times (<http://www.latimes.com>), but I did get Ms. Van Burnham of Wired Magazine (<http://www.wired.com>). I got most all of the venders that I have known over the years to sign my programs and of course the likes of Sean Kelly, Leonard Herman, Jerry Jessop, Arnie Katz, David Staugas and the rest of the World of Atari '98.

I am not certain why I did not see representation from Hasbro InterActive (<http://www.hasbro-interactive.com>) A lot of people would like to know what their plans are with their new acquisition. A lot of people want to know why ATARI.COM seems to have been abandoned since JTS (<http://www.jtscorp.com>) shut it down (especially me since I produced the original site for Atari). People like Mr. Nolan Bushnell would have been nice to see one day. Other names that would have fit in well with the atmosphere would have been Activision and Williams.

Just the same, I had one heck of a great time.

Do I have any regrets at all? Yup. I regret losing as much as I did in the slots.

### END ###

Next-Generation Online: World of Atari Report

World of Atari Report Who was there, what was shown, and is Jaguar BattleSphere for real? These questions and more answered in Next Generation Online's report on World of Atari '98.

August 24, 1998

It was an intriguing idea. To put on a show that centered around the company that started the video game craze some twenty years after it

began. Set over three nights and two days, the World of Atari 1998 show took place at the Holiday Inn Casino Boardwalk in Las Vegas. And the gaming world may never be the same.

The show was primarily organized by three individuals, Richard Tsukiji, Keita Iida, and John Hardie. These three gentlemen have been long time Atari supporters. At the height of Atari popularity during the Tramiel Era, Tsukiji organized several World of Atari shows which met with great success. Iida published a newsletter called the Atari Zone and helped launch the Atari Gaming Headquarters ([www.atarihq.com](http://www.atarihq.com)) web site with John Hardie. Hardie has been a staunch supporter of all things Atari for many years including working on previous World of Atari Shows and serving as Vice President of the Alamo Area Atari Users Association. But, even after the demise of the Atari Corporation, they still saw the power that the company had instilled throughout the world. Relying on this knowledge, they decided to put together another show.

Even though the show was titled "World of Atari," there was a much larger sense of community present at the show. Most of the classic gaming systems were represented. The Intellivision, the Colecovision, and the 8-bit home computers stood aside the 2600, 5200, 7800, and Atari XE/ST computers. It was quite impressive to see such a strong showing from a gaming era that has passed us by for perspective correcting texture mapping and "well endowed polygons named Lara," according to Don Thomas, who was [sic] worked for Atari during the Tramiel days.

On Friday night, an informal party was thrown to kick off the show. The idea was simple, to get as many attendees, guests, and dealers together to set the mood for the weekend. And it did a fabulous job. Food, drink, and music kept the atmosphere light while everyone got to know one another. The party was topped off with a set of quick opening comments from Don Thomas.

At 10 a.m. Saturday, the doors opened and the crowd made its way into the show. There were three different rooms for the showgoers to explore. First was the dealer room which was sponsored by Nyko ([www.nyko.com](http://www.nyko.com)). At the Nyko booth one could try it's new trackball controller for the PlayStation. Running Missile Command through the Williams Arcade Classics CD showed just how much thought the R&D department had put into the trackball. They also displayed their remote RF signal adapters for the Playstation and Nintendo 64. No more cables running from your system to the tv. Just plug in one adapter to the TV and the other to your system of choice.

Undeniably, the most anticipated developer at the show was 4Play. (<http://www.best.com/~sebab/dvidgames/dsphere/sphere.shtml>) The company's Scott LeGrand and Stephanie Wukovitz were in attendance to show off their recently completed game, BattleSphere. In many circles, BattleSphere is generally considered to be the best Atari Jaguar game. Developed over four and a half years while additionally holding down steady jobs, BattleSphere became the light at the end of the tunnel for the hardcore Jaguar user - and it did not disappoint. The astounded crowd huddled around the consoles as it booted up. Showgoer Doug Childs remarked, "It was definitely worth the wait." World of Atari sponsored both a Networked BattleSphere and a Warlords elimination contest. Winners were given copies of Hasbro's Frogger, Star Wars Monopoly, and the Namco Museum compilation for PlayStation.

Other developers at the show included Wizztronics, Inc. ([www.wiztronics.com](http://www.wiztronics.com)) which had it's Lynx-to-TV adapter on display. This

small modification board will allow a Lynx player to use his television as a display unit. The image was sharp and stable. Another developer was Emulators, Inc. ([www.emulators.com](http://www.emulators.com)) which had it's Atari/Mac emulation boards for the PC up and running. It was strange to see the Atari and Mac Desktops running on the PC, but they were there and they were fast.

A multitude of exhibitors were strategically placed throughout the dealer room. Companies including Best Electronics ([best-electronics-ca.com](http://best-electronics-ca.com)), B&C Computer Visions ([myatari.com](http://myatari.com)), and Steve's Computer Technology ([www.atarionline.com](http://www.atarionline.com)). These dealers featured any game or game system that one wanted to add to their collection, and dealers kept their prices to a very respectable level.

Also placed throughout the dealer room were some classic arcade machines that were open for all to play. Star Wars, Asteroids, Wizard of War, Gauntlet 2, Centipede, and several other classics made appearances. Even with machines of this size, there were rare and prototypes available for play. Jerry Jessop brought along the first Computer Space cabinet, the fiberglass gaming console that started it all. Long before Pong, this was the game of choice. And it was in mint condition using 95 of it's original parts. Also included were a prototype Atari pinball machine called Neutron Star from 1981, an Atari Games machine that never saw release called Freeze from 1995, (which was excellent and should have been released), and even the venerable old Pong itself.

Namco, creators of the classic games Pac-Man, Pole Position, and Dig Dug, sponsored the Museum Exhibit. The museum featured systems dating back as far as 1972 with the Magnavox Odyssey. Notable items in the museum included the Graduate Computer Keyboard adapter for the Atari 2600, the prototype of the remote controlled Atari 2600 titled the 2700, the Atari Mindlink Controller, the Atari Cosmos which was a holographic game system, the Atari Mirai which is rumored to be the design for the game system based on the Atari ST computer lines, and the original Virtual Light Machine - the Atari Video Music (1976). Over sixty items were present in the museum while even more rare items were found at the Atari Historical Society (<http://www.atari.nu/>).

The third room at the show was designated for the Keynote Speakers and the Sunday Evening auction. Speakers included Don Thomas, Rob Fulop (2600 Missile Command and co-founder of Imagic), Dan Kramer (5200 trackball), Jerry Jessop (member of the Atari R&D team/Atari 2000 project), Scott LeGrand and Stephanie Wukovitz (4Play), John Harris (designer of Jawbreaker and Frogger for the Atari 8bit Computers), Dave Staugus (Millipede and Krull for the Atari 2600), and Arnie Katz, Joyce Worley, and Bill Kunkel (founders of the first videogame magazine, Electronic Games).

Said Dan Kramer of his time at Atari: "I can tell you it was a fabulous place to work. And it wasn't our imagination that we were doing some of the coolest, funnest, neatest stuff we've ever encountered. It was a circus all day long, but we did the work and turned out product." And while most of the speakers used their time to discuss their experiences with or involving Atari, Don Thomas struck a cord about the future of the gaming, "This weekend's World of Atari 98 Show is indicative of an old trend that is re-emerging. It is one that explores the value of updating and republishing classic videogames."

But after each day ended, the group of show goers continued to enjoy themselves in the Vegas nightlife. Either gambling, going across the street to Sega Gameworks, or heading over to the Hilton to ride the Star

Trek Experience, there were more than enough activities to take up whatever time was left over from the show.

Over all, the show seemed a resounding success. It took the remnants of the first generation of video gaming and gave them a place to stand. The speakers, the museum, and the dealer rooms provided some very interesting sites and buys.

And while some players may look back and scoff at the 2600 or other similar systems, there were more than enough people of all age groups enjoying themselves and proving that there is life in any platform; even after it has been discontinued.

And while this year's show may be over, there is still a way to experience the event. A two-hour video is currently in production detailing the events of the past weekend. Professionally shot, edited, and duplicated, this tape will feature direct feeds from games at the show, all the speakers, the dealer room, the Namco Museum, and much more.

For more information, go to this address  
-(<http://home.earthlink.net/~santora/woav.htm>).

ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine

The wires are a hummin'!

#### PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

Compiled by Joe Mirando  
jmirando@streport.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, it's back to our regular schedule I guess. Just in time, as far as I'm concerned. There's lots of stuff that I want to talk about and one column a month just doesn't give me the room I need to vent it all. Anyone who knows me knows how I rant and rave, and that I don't usually stop until I'm darned good and ready. So I hope you're in the mood for a little good old fashioned ranting for the next few weeks. We're going to start with CompuServe's decision to turn "The Computer Club" Forum into an HMI-only place. If you're not familiar with The Computer Club, I'll fill you in. It's a forum dedicated to 'orphan' computers like our own ST line. There are users of the Texas Instruments TI-994A, the Coleco Adam, Timex/Sinclair ZX81, and several others that escape my memory at the moment. What gets my knickers in a twist is the idea that anyone would be best served by making this forum HMI-only.

HMI is CompuServe's proprietary 32 bit software scheme for accessing their online service. It does provide some nice features, but I find it to be uniformly slow and cumbersome to use, RAM and hard drive intensive, and generally more poorly thought out and implemented than any piece of software I've seen on the Atari platform... ever.

All of these shortcomings could be overlooked (even if only with practice) were it not for the fact that CompuServe holds the code to make HMI work tighter than a miser holds a dollar. They have steadfastly refused to release the code to those programmers who might have the time, ingenuity, ability, or inclination to write an application for any of these so-called orphan machines.

This brings me to my next point... How wise is it to force a forum (and from the info I've been getting, they are FORCING forums to switch over) to use a protocol which will, by their own policy, deny access to the very users that the forum is there to help? You see, if you have an Atari ST, the only place on CompuServe worth going to for software and information is The Computer Club. The staff there is top notch without exception, the users that frequent the forum are knowledgable, and the software in the libraries, while a bit thin, is enough to keep a lot of users going for a while. But after September 20th, you won't be able to access the forum with an ST. Yes, there are a lot of ST users who also have either a PC or a Mac, but lots of them don't. So they won't be able to get to anything that the forum has to offer. Consequently, I expect many of them to do what I'm going to do at the end of the month... CANCEL MY SUBSCRIPTION TO COMPUVERSE. You probably have no idea of how much it hurt to have to type that last line. You see, I've used CompuServe for more than ten years now. It was my first online "home" and it's still where I'm most comfortable. Not necessarily because it's any better than any other service, but because it was my first online experience, and because the Sysop and staff of the now defunct Atari Forum were the best in the business... they spoiled me, I guess. Nonetheless, the bloom has been off the rose for quite a while now and even a die-hard such as myself has to face the fact that all good things must come to an end. The only things I've been using CompuServe for lately were my visits to The Computer Club, email, and as an ISP. With the loss of the forum, I simply cannot justify paying CompuServe even their minimum charge. I have therefore signed up with a local ISP who provides 56K v.90 access, email, web space, and NewsGroups. For about half of what I have been paying CompuServe, I've now got everything I need except for the forum. I will miss it quite a bit, but the folks over at Delphi's Atari Advantage forum are great people, the forum is more active than the Atari section within The Computer Club, and I've been there almost as long as I've been with CompuServe, so I feel almost as comfortable there.

Another nice thing about Delphi is that, while CompuServe has seen fit to restrict access, Delphi has gone out of its way to expand the access possibilities. You can now access almost every forum on Delphi in one of two ways. You can use your internet connection to get there and cruise along web page style, or you can dial in the way we've been doing it for all these years and access using good old ASCII. And to add to the coolness of their setup, if you only access Delphi via the web (you need a browser that accepts and recognizes cookies, so I'll have to wait for CAB 2.7 to hit shore on this side of the Atlantic), access is FREE. Yes, that's right. It's free!

While I'm sad beyond belief that I won't be using CompuServe any more, I'm glad that I've got a place like Delphi to go to. If you are a CompuServe subscriber and don't like this change, by all means let them know by sending email to FEEDBACK. I'm not saying that the only viable move is to leave CompuServe. It's still a great service... if you can access it. I guess I just don't like being told what type of computer I have to use if I'm going to subscribe to their service. Something seems a bit "back-asswards" there. It's like being told that you have to have either a GM or Ford automobile to use the highway... an old Volkswagen Beetle or Plymouth Fury just won't do.

Well, I think I'm about out of 'attitude' for the moment, so let's take a look at what's going on in the NewsGroups.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

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Alan Maydwell asks:

"Does anyone know if it is possible to get Ghostlink to work with MagiC v5.11 ? I've got it to work with MagiC v2 in the past but it doesn't seem to get on with MagiC v5.11. "

Carsten Krumnow tells Alan:

"Try EASE from the MagiC 2 package (if you have that one). It works."

Alan tells Carsten:

"Thanks for the tip but I don't have EASE as it doesn't come with the UK version of MagiC. I'm not sure if i'd like to use EASE anyway as I'm happy with Magxdesk and would rather consider using Thing or Jinnee as an alternative."

Carsten tells Alan:

"Unfortunately all versions of MagiCDesk as well as jinnee and the newer versions of the EASE have the problem with Ghostlink (as well as the MagiC file select box...)."

Aaron Turner asks:

"...will cubase run in non monochrome res, or are there sequencers for the atari that will? I don't have a colour monitor, so to run in colour I need to run Atari->SCART into a TV, but it would be nice to be able to avoid changing monitors all the time. Either that or a simulator I suppose (but I have a very old 1040, and a lot of stuff seems not to run on my old version of TOS)>."

Nicholas Bales tells Aaron: Cubase, as well as most "serious" programs, requires a 640x400 resolution, so you need a hi res monitor. A hi-res emulator slows down the machine a bit, so that can cause problems with timing-intensive programs like Cubase.

You sound a bit mixed up with resolutions/monitors, so here is the run down:

monochrome=Hi-res (640x400/2 colours) => SM124/125/144... monitors only, or an emulator such as Sebra.

colour=Low-res (320x200/16) or Mid-res (640x200/4) => TV or colour monitor."

William Platt asks:

"Are the Mega and TT keyboards the same as the falcon's?"

Nicholas Bales tells William:

"Not exactly, but they can be adapted. It's just a matter of rewiring the connector.

There are instructions for this around FTP sites, or in the DOITF030 archive."

My old friend Sheldon Winick tells William:

"No. The Mega and TT030 keyboards are external -- the Falcon uses a 1040ST style integrated keyboard (unfortunately, with the same mushy feel that the 1040 had)."

Karl Samyn posts this interesting little tidbit:

"For those of you that are interested in connecting your Atari Computers to an Ethernet network, cable modem via Ethernet, or Digital Subscriber Line via Ethernet, please read on.

A lot of people want to connect their Atari to an Ethernet network. It seems that with no ethernet adapters currently in production for Atari compatible models, and with the relative scarcity of previously manufactured boards, it would make sense to find an existing adapter for use with Atari. The one port type that all Atari computers can connect to is SCSI (older models require a SCSI host adapter such as a Link). This is also one of the fastest ports on the Atari computers.

A few months ago, John Perez came up with the idea to write drivers for the already existing SCSI -> Ethernet adaptor from the Apple Macintosh platform. Since I couldn't contact John anymore, and didn't know how far he got with this project, I decided to continue it.

The last couple of months I did some research by contacting some companies and people who would be able to help us. All the info I gathered will appear on this page :

[http://193.190.205.13/Popo/148\\_pol/samyn/network/project/SCSI\\_A.htm](http://193.190.205.13/Popo/148_pol/samyn/network/project/SCSI_A.htm) The purpose of this page is merely to consolidate (for public review) my findings thus far on the various SCSI-to-Ethernet solutions that the Atari community may have access to; and, to convince the right people that supporting our platform is worthwhile.

Your support :

The Atari community definately has the resources to get an act like this off the ground. So I need your support!! One little e-mail is enough. I have also started a "Hardware Petition" that I will use to leverage support. I would like to pool donations, purchase an adapter, and ship it to the software developer that has agreed to look into the project.

Up to now, there are only 10 people interested in a project like this, although I think many more people want to connect their Atari to an ethernet network. Already a few of these people want to make a donation.

The more people who support this project, the easier it will be to convince the companies to give us the necessary information. If we can get the help of a software or hardware company that still supports the Atari, it might be even easier to convince them. Interestingly, there is a similar project on the Amiga platform. If we cooperate with them to get the information we need from the companies, we have more leverage.

Programmers wanted :

Once I have all the necessary technical specifications, we only need programmers to write the drivers. A driver for MiNT and one for STiNG would be necessary. Are there any programmers who would like to join this project? Simply drop me a mail.

If you can see yourself wanting to buy and use such a device, then please visit the page and fill out the petition! This will help our cause greatly."

Mark at Particle Salad tells Karl:

"Fine and dandy.. I'd LOVE to be able to transfer files between my Falcon and my Mac. However, I don't use Mint or Sting.. I assume they are alternate OSs.. I mainly only use my Falcon for music, so running an alt OS makes no sense, as CAF doesn't run under them."

It would be a MUST to write a driver that works with TOS.. at least to me."

Tony Cianfaglione asks for help:

"Where can I find STing? I have CAB and STiK but there is no local SLIP connections so I would need STing."

Nick Bales tells Tony quite succinctly:

"<http://www.stud.uni-hannover.de/~perot/index-e.html>"

Dennis Bishop posts this about his problems with trying to start an email list:

"OK, onelist.com is once more taking lists, I went in 3 times today, cab 2.7/ovl 3010. would get the main screen ok, would sign in, no troubles, the next page would load in ...

As the 'Start New List' page is displayed, cab crashes with two bombs.

If they are using javascript, then i know why it crashes. otherwise i don't know."

Terry Ross tells Dennis:

"I've had similar 2 bomb problems, of varying intensity. Sometimes CAB would bomb out as soon as I loaded it and entered a URL. I tried all sorts of modifications with CAB and CAB.OVL and nothing worked. Then I went to the STinG tools and tried to resolve the hosts. Guess what. 2 bombs. When I deleted the CACHE.DNS from inside the STinG folder and started fresh, most of the sites that I was having problems with were available to me. Unfortunately, I've had to do this about 3 times now. This is using STinG 1.15 and the latest modules. I think I'm going to look over my archives disk to see if I can find an earlier version of RESOLVE.STX and see what happens."

Nelson Cook asks:

"Has anyone else had problems ordering stuff from ICD, of "link 2" fame?"

Jo Vandeweghe tells Nelson:

"They stopped business a few months ago if I remember correctly."

Steve Hammond tells Nelson:

"Tried ordering from them a few months ago and could never get anyone to

return my phone calls. I am not even sure if they are still in business."

Stephen Moss posts:

"Question 1)

Where can I get hold of a working Forget Me Clock cartridge and associated software with in the UK either new or second hand?.

Question 2)

In the past some people have had a minor dig at my previous postings because they were not word wrapped, I assure you that this was down to the software and nothing to do with me. I am now using new software which should word wrap this posting. Can someone confirm this?

Question 3)

I have been successfully transferring files from a 486 PC running Windows 3.1 to my STfm (TOS 1.2). I now have a new pentium PC running Window 95 and since then every time I try to load a file from the floppy to my ST it keeps flashing that alert box which says that the data on the disk is damaged or the drive is not connected. Has anyone else had this problem and if so do they know the solution?. I suspect Windows 95, or is it that my TOS version is too old, I would be interested to see if both 720k ST's and 1.44MB TT's/Falcon's have the same problem as me, and before you suggest it yes I am using a 720K MS DOS format Disk."

Chris Crosskey tells Stephen:

"I've not had problems with Win95 disks transferring to either my Falcon or my STE under TOS2.06, it might be a problem with early TOS versions. Also I've been able to easily transfer stuff burnt on PC CDR drives to the Falcon and STE and from CDR's off the Falcon onto PC. Apparently the new version of CD Recorder Pro will run on an ST so you could use CDR...."

Harvey Kennett asks for info about the Atari line:

"If you spare a few moments to answer any of my questions, I'd be Soooooo grateful!"

1. As far as I know, the ST machines that Atari made were

520STF

520STFM

1040STF

1040STFM

Falcon

Is that correct ? I last used my Atari 1040STF some years ago and have no idea on what's new.

2. Would the newest Atari (Is that the Falcon?) run my old 1040STF software (STOS and Cubase) or would I need to buy them again for a newer machine ?

3. Whilst I remember that the 1040ST was THE musicians tool, has it been supplanted by a newer Atari ?"

Vidar Olavesen tells Harvey:

"The STe range, Mega ST range, since you have Falcon, the TT range. And if you're talking STf then there's 520 ST, 1040 ST, I even believe some were

sold of 260ST too.

STOS could be a problem, but maybe with patches or the Backward program. But, Cubase is better if you do buy the Falcon version. It has direct to disk recording and such. I am not too sure about the differences though!

You answered it yourself, the Falcon is newer and better music machine."

Chris Crosskey tells Harvey:

"If I recall correctly, there was a 260 ST, you've missed out the 520 STM, you've missed all the Mega's (Mega ST's 1, 2 and 4 and Mega STE), you've missed the original (and rare 520 ST, there were the Stacy portables in a variety of memory and hard-disk configurations, the ST-Book laptop and the TT I guess would count too. Before anyone who doesn't know asks, the Portfolio is not a TOS machine, I know, I've got one. Although badges were made for 4160 STE's I don't think the machine itself was ever officially released, though lots of us now have STE's that proudly proclaim their 4Mb status with the badge, thanks to Brad at Best Electronics taking them to every show he goes to ...thanks Brad:-)))

The Falcon runs some versions of Cubase, one day I'll try it with Cubase v2 if no-one else has, but AFAIK Cubase 3 and up will run OK on Falcons. STOS....why bother? Even if it will run, most of the software it will produce won't....well not without some patching anyway...

Yeah, the 4160 spec STE is the baby to have, load of ACC's and still tons of space to have a full Cubase installation and a huge area for the song..... NVDI makes a big difference too, and apparently the Veloce 020 accelerator is compatible so you should have a flying machine available if you have an STE and about 120 UKP to spend on it, IIRC in mono mode it's damn near as fast as a Falcon..."

Well folks, that's about it for this week. Since we're back to our normal schedule, tune in again next week... same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

EDITORIAL QUICKIES

If you think you have a problem with computer addiction you probably have.

Here are the warning signs:

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'RE HOOKED?  
13 Symptoms of Computer Addiction

- \* During a 2 a.m. call to the bathroom you check your e-mail.
- \* When your neighbor mentions taking a drive, you think not miles but megs.
- \* When channel-surfing the infomercials, you grab the remote control and double-click.
- \* Down at the local computer store they know your name and favorite chip.
- \* Your favorite movies are Brainstorm, Tron, War Games, and, of course, 2001; your preferred Murder She Wrote episode is the one in which Jessica solves the case of the fatal disk error.
- \* So many relatives and friends call you when they need help with their computers that you're considering installing a 900 number.
- \* There's an ISDN line running into your home, and the notion of low baud rates reminds you of nursery schools and training wheels.
- \* You have chronic lower back pain, knots in your shoulders, and a cramp in your mouse finger, and you can't see more than three feet in front of your face.
- \* Your penmanship looks worse than it did in the fourth grade.
- \* You call your PC "Cousin 'Puter".
- \* You call your computer chair "The Seat of Power."
- \* Never mind those old 5.25-inch floppies, you still have those hoary 8.5 inchers!
- \* For that matter, you don't throw out bad floppies, you decorate them and use them as drink coasters.

Remember, denial is not a river in Egypt.

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